THE REASONABLENESS AND CERTAINTY OF THE Christian Religion.

VOL. II.

Containing, Discourses upon such Subjects as are thought most liable to Objections.

By ROBERT JENKIN, late Fellow of St. *John's* College in *Cambridge*.

The Second Edition, Corrected, and very much Enlarged.

LONDON:
Printed by *W. B.* for RICHARD SARE at *Grays-Inn Gate* in *Holborn*. 1708.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE PREFACE.

THere never appeared, I believe, among Chriſtians, ſo general a Diſaffection as in the preſent Age, to the Chriſtian Religion, in Men pretending at leaſt to Reaſon, and Learning, and Natural Religion, and Moral Vertue. And tho' I could have little Encouragement to hope, that I ſhould write any thing which might much prevail with Men of theſe Accompliſhments; yet I was perſuaded, that ſo good a Cauſe, tho' but in weak Hands, could not fail of ſome Effect upon all that would be at the pains to conſider it. And to this purpoſe, I thought, the beſt way would be, not to read Lectures, as it were, of Anatomy upon the ſeveral Parts of it, and repreſent it Piece-meal, like a lifeleſs Carcaſs, divided and diſſected; tho' I had been able to ſhew never ſo much Skill in the Operation; but to give an entire View of the Grounds and Reaſons of Chriſtianity, the connexion of its Parts between themſelves and the Preference which it has to all other Religions; from whence, I knew, it muſt appear in as true a Light, and with as much Life and Force, as it could do under the Diſadvantages, which might be expected from no

better a Pen. There is an Excellency in every Part of our Religion ſeparately conſider'd, but the ſtrength and vigour of each Part is in the Relation it has to the reſt, and the ſeveral Parts muſt be taken altogether, if we would have a true Knowledge, and make a juſt Eſtimate of the Whole.

But that which I made my more particular Care, and which, I thought, the more requir'd my Pains, becauſe I had not obſerved it to be much inſiſted upon by others, was to ſhew the Neceſſity of a Divine Revelation, the inſufficiency of Natural Religion, and the Imperfections and Errors of Philoſophy, as well as the manifeſt Falſhood of the Religions both of the Heathens and of the Mahometans; and moreover to prove, that beſides all other Things requiſite to a Divine Revelation, the Religion delivered in the Old and New Teſtament has received a full Promulgation in all Parts of the World. From theſe Foundations thus laid and ſecur'd, we have no leſs than a Demonſtration for the Truth of our Holy Religion.

We are often told by thoſe that are no Friends to our Religion, that we muſt by all means take great Care of not being deceived through the Prejudices derived from our Education, but I believe it would be found upon Enquiry, that ſuch Men are ſo far from being prejudiced in Favour of our Religion, that their Prejudices lie extremely againſt it. For, beſides the Corruption of Humane Nature always inclining to Error and Vice, tho'

they had the Principles of Chriſtianity inſtill'd into them in their tender Years, yet they could learn them then only as confeſs'd Truths, to be receiv'd for Articles of Faith and Rules of Life. But the firſt thing probably to which they have ſet themſelves with any Application, was the reading of Heathen Authors, and when perhaps they have ſtudied Philoſophy and other Humane Learning for many Years, but never conſidered Divinity, as a Science, and have ſearched into it no farther, nor have any other Notion of it, than what they were taught in their Childhood or Youth, they look back upon their firſt Inſtructions as groundleſs, and fit only for Children, becauſe they find little or nothing of them in thoſe Authors, with whom they have been ſo long converſant, and whom upon many Accounts they have ſo juſt Reaſon to admire. This ſeems to be the Caſe of many who have read ancient Heathen Authors, without the Regard, which ought always to be had to That, which is acknowledg'd by All; who have made any due Enquiry into theſe Things, to be the beſt Learning and of greateſt Antiquity, and is no where to be had but from the Scriptures. Others there are, who have often heard of the Names of *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Ariſtotle*, and of *Tully*, *Seneca*, and other Famous Writers; they find them frequently quoted, and commonly with Commendation, ſeldom to diſcover any Fault in them, unleſs it be in their Notions of Natural Philoſophy, where Religion ſeems to be leſs concerned. They have heard too of the

Greek and Latin Hiſtorians, and theſe, for any thing that they know or conſider, may be as Faithful and as Ancient as the beſt.

But tho' all theſe Authors have indeed very many Excellencies, yet we muſt not ſo far miſtake, as to think all things Excellent which they deliver. I ſhall therefore, beſides what I have already obſerved, make ſome farther Reflections in this place, both upon the Hiſtory, and upon the Philoſophy of Heathen Nations, and then I hope I may be allowed to expoſtulate with the Adverſaries of our Religion, concerning the Unreaſonableneſs of their Proceedings, before I come to give a ſhort Account of my preſent Undertaking.

I. Whatever knowledge almoſt we have now left of the Antiquities of other Heathen Nations, it comes conveyed down to us by the Greek Authors; and yet there is perhaps no Nation, which generally had a worſe Reputation in matters of Hiſtory, not only by common Fame and the Invectives of Satyriſts, but from the Cenſures of the beſt Writers, and the Accuſations which the Hiſtorians made one of another, as [a] *Joſephus* ſhews of many whoſe Works are now loſt. [b] *Thucydides* himſelf could not eſcape free from Cenſure, who complains of the negligence and unfaithfulneſs of the other Greek Hiſtorians, and he is thought to point particularly at *Herodotus*, whom *Plutarch* expoſed in a ſet Diſcourſe: tho' much indeed has

[a] Vid. Joſeph. contr. Apion. lib. i. [b] Thucyd. lib. i. c. 20, 21.

been

been ſaid in Vindication of *Herodotus*, by *H. Stephens* and *Joac. Camerarius*; and the Diſcoveries of Modern Travellers confirm many things in this Hiſtory, which were formerly thought incredible. [c] *Strabo* has obſerv'd, that the Greeks knew little of the moſt Famous Nations of *Aſia*, except the *Perſians*, and that *Homer* knew nothing of the Empire of the *Aſſyrians* or *Medes*, but that he has omitted the mention of the Magnificence of *Babylon*, *Nineveh*, and *Ecbatane*, tho' he took notice of the *Ægyptian Thebes*, and of the Wealth both of that Place and of [d] *Phœnicia*. *Salluſt* ſuſpected that the *Athenians* too highly magnified their own Actions. [e] *Quintilian* compares the Greek Hiſtorians to Poets, for the Liberty which they commonly took. [f] *Arrian*, upon the different Account given by *Ariſtobulus*, and *Ptolemeus Lagi*, of the Death of *Calliſthenes*, remarks, that the moſt credible Hiſtorians, who accompanied *Alexander*, diſagreed in the relation of things, which were publick, and could not be unknown to them. And there is in [g] *Voſpiſcus* a ſevere Charge againſt the Hiſtorians in general, that there is none of them, who has not falſified in ſome thing or other, particularly that as to *Livy*, *Salluſt*, *Tacitus* and *Trogus Pompeius*, it might

[c] Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. [d] Salluſt. Bell. Catilin.

[e] Græcis Hiſtoriis plerumque Poeticæ ſimilis eſt licentia. Quint. l. ii. c. 4. [f] De Exped. Alex. l. 4.

[g] Neminem Scriptorum, quantum ad Hiſtoriam pertinet, non aliquid eſſe mentitum. Vopiſc. in Aureliano.

be clearly proved upon them. And [h] *Pliny* has furniſhed us with an inſtance of great Partiality in the Roman Hiſtories, which conceal that *Porſena* in his League with the People of *Rome*, obliged them to make no uſe of Iron, but for the Tilling of the Grounds: This, *Pliny* confeſſes, was an expreſs Article of that League: And how unlike is the *Roman* to the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory in this very Inſtance? For in the Scriptures we find it twice mentioned, that the *Iſraelites* were reduced to that Condition, that they were permitted to have no Weapons of War, *Judges* v. 8. 1 *Sam.* xiii. 19. But the Roman [i] Hiſtorians had more regard to the Honour of the Roman Name than to Truth. And it is no Commendation of the ſame Hiſtorians, that they take ſo little notice of the *Jews*, and ſay ſo little to their Advantage, when they do ſpeak of them, ſince *Joſephus* has proved the Leagues between the *Jews* and the *Romans*, and the Privileges granted them by the *Romans*, beyond all Denial, from the Tables then extant wherein they were contained.

Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus differs in many things from *Livy*, and the other Roman Authors. And [k] *Polybius*, contrary to the known Story of

[h] In fædere, quod, expulſis Regibus, Populo Romano dedit Porſena, nominatim comprehenſum invenimus, ne ferro, niſi in Agricultură, uterentur. Plin. Nat. Hiſt. lib. xxxiv. c. 14.

[i] Tacent id Hiſtorici, ut pudendum Victori poſtea Gentium Populi; at Plinius ingenue fatetur. Grot. ad 1 Sam. xiii. 19.

[k] Γεγόνασι γὰρ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ἀπάντων ἐπιφανεῖς, καὶ τῆς πόλεως αὐτῆς μιᾶς ἔπλα κυκλώσαντες, τέλος ἐθνῶν καὶ μέ-

of the Roman Hiſtorians, informs us, that the *Gauls*, after they had been in full Poſſeſſion of all things, and Maſters of *Rome* it ſelf for ſeven Months, returned home, voluntarily delivering up the City, without any hurt or force from the *Romans*, but with great Spoil: and that the News, that the *Veneti* had invaded their own Country, was the cauſe of their Return. [l] *Fabius Pictor*, the moſt ancient Roman Hiſtorian, lived in *Hanibal*'s time, and wrote, in *Greek*, an Account of the *Carthaginian* War; but [m] *Polybius* ſays, he differed from *Philinus*, and both were partial; *Philinus* to the *Carthaginians*, and *Fabius* to the *Romans*. But does *Livy* confute *Philinus*, or acknowledge the Partiality of *Fabius*?

[n] *Livy* declares, that moſt of the Monuments of Antiquity, whether publick or private, were deſtroyed, when the City was burnt by the *Gauls*, and that for this Reaſon, his Hiſtory to the rebuilding of the City, near Four hundred Years after it was firſt built, is but uncertain.

The moſt ancient Writings, which had any relation to Hiſtory among the *Romans*, were their Funeral Orations: Theſe were preſerved in their ſeveral Families, which as [o] *Tully* confeſſeth, cauſed their Hiſtory to be faulty, many things being inſerted in this ſort of Works,

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χάειν δ' ἀναδόντες τ πόλιν, ἄθραυστοι καὶ ἀσινεῖς ἔχοντες τ ὠφέλειαν, εἰς τ οἰκείαν ἐπανῆλθον. Polyb. l. ii.

[l] Liv. l. i. c. 44. l. xxii. c. 17. Dion. Halicarn. l. i.

[m] Polyb. l. vi.

[n] Liv. lib. vi. c. 1.

[o] Cic. Brut.

which

which were never done, falſe Triumphs, falſe Conſulſhips, and falſe Genealogies. The [p] *Annales Maximi* were of good uſe, but they contained only the firſt Lines and rough Draughts of Hiſtory, which appeared quite another thing, when it was filled up, and repreſented entire, with the Reaſons and Circumſtances of Affairs, according to the Pleaſure or Skill of the Writer. But the Praiſes [q] of their Anceſtors were ſung in Verſe at their Banquets, where ſtrict Truth could rarely be heard. The [r] firſt Publiſhers of Hiſtory, in the Latin Tongue, were Poets; *Nevius* wrote the firſt Punick War in Verſe, and was puniſhed for defaming the *Metelli*: After him, *Ennius* wrote his Annals in Eighteen Books, and was in great Favour and Eſteem with *Scipio Africanus* and *Scipio Aſiaticus*. The Generals of Armies ſometimes had [s] their Hiſtorians or Poets along with them, whom they liberally rewarded; we may be ſure, not for telling when they were beaten. [t] *Atticus*, in *Tully*, ſays, it was a thing of courſe to relate Matters of Hiſtory, not according to Truth, but in ſuch a manner, as might beſt ſhew the Wit and Eloquence of the Writers. [u] *Tully* lays it down as a known and fundamental Rule of Hiſtory, that an Hiſtorian ſhould dare to ſay any Truth, but nothing that is falſe. Yet in an

[p] Id. de Orat. lib. ii.
[q] Id. Brut.
[r] Voſſ. de Hiſt. Lat. l. i. c. 2.
[s] Id. Pro Archia Poeta.
[t] Quoniam quidem conceſſum eſt Rhetoribus mentiri in Hiſtoriis, ut aliquid dicere poſſint argutius. Id. Brut.
[u] De Orat. lib. ii.

Epiſtle

Epiſtle to *Luceius*, whom he entreats to write the Hiſtory of his own Miniſtration of Affairs, he earneſtly beſeeches [x] *Luceius*, in plain Terms to neglect the Laws of Hiſtory in his Favour, and to diſregard Truth. And as if this had been a thing not unuſual, or, at leaſt, warrantable enough; he commends this Epiſtle in another to *Atticus*, and deſires him to promote the Deſign. It has been remarked by ſome as a Fate upon *Cicero*, that this Teſtimony of his Vanity ſhould remain, when the Hiſtory, of which he was ſo deſirous, is loſt, if it was ever written: But who knows how many ſuch Epiſtles are loſt, when the Hiſtories are preſerved? [y] *Trebonius* made the like Requeſt to *Cicero*, and *Pliny* wrote in the like manner to *Tacitus*, and both with the ſame Fate. *Pliny* wrote Inſtructions of what he deſired might be inſerted concerning himſelf, [z] intimating withal, that *Tacitus* would give to every thing a Luſtre and Grandeur, exceeding the Truth, and beyond what he required. This is in common with the Greek and Latin Hiſtorians, that they put ſuch Speeches as they think fit, into the Mouths of the ſeveral Perſons concerned in the Actions they relate, which gives another View and Appearance to the Scene of Affairs, and acquaints us, not what ſuch Perſons ſaid or thought, but

[x] Epiſt. Famil. lib. v. Epiſt. 12. Ad Attic. lib. iv. Epiſt. 6.

[y] Cic. Epiſt. Fam. l. xii.

[z] Hæc utcunque ſe habent, notiora, clariora, majora tu facies: quanquam non exigo, ut excedas actæ rei modum. Plin. Epiſt. l. vii. Ep. ult.

what

what the Hiſtorian would have ſpoke, and what Advice he would have given, if he had been in their place. It is ſtrange to ſee the Difference between [a] *Cæſar*'s own Speeches in his Commentaries, and thoſe which *Dion Caſſius* makes for him, both in the Circumſtances and Reaſons of things. But the Hiſtorians left their proper Buſineſs, and play'd the Orators upon theſe occaſions. And therefore [b] *Diodorus Siculus* found fault with this way of inſerting ſet Orations into Hiſtories, and [c] *Trogus Pompeius* blam'd it particularly in *Livy* and *Salluſt*. But *Herodotus* has much of the Simplicity of Ancient times, his Speeches are Natural, containing for the moſt part but a bare Narrative of what was ſaid or done, only the Perſons tell their own Story. But of all the Speeches which are to be met withal in any Hiſtory, there are none ſo Natural, or which have ſuch plain Characters of Truth in them, as thoſe in the Scriptures.

The Antiquities of *China* were deſtroy'd about two hundred years before Chriſt, and from the ſeveral Relations given of that matter by different Authors, it appears, that the *Chineſes* are rather willing to have it believ'd, that their old Books were in ſome ſtrange manner or other preſerv'd, than that they are able to make it out.

It was the Cuſtom of the *Ægyptians* to omit the mention of theſe Perſons, of whom they

[a] Cæſar. Comment. l. vii. Dion. Caſſ. l. xxxviii.
[b] Diod. Sic. lib. xx. init. [c] Juſt. l. xxxvi. c. 3.

had

had any Diſlike, or who had made themſelves odious to them. Thus in the XXth Dynaſty of their Kings, there is a total Vacancy for the ſpace of CLXVIII Years, which the Learned Mr. *Greaves*, with great Probability, ſupplies with the Names of thoſe Kings, who built the Pyramids, two whereof, *Cheops* and *Chephren*, as [d] *Herodotus* ſays, the *Ægyptians*, out of Hatred to them, would not ſo much as name, but call'd the Pyramids, which they had erected, the *Pyramids* of *Philition*, a Shepherd, who in thoſe days fed his Cattle there: *The which Hatred*, ſays [e] Mr. *Greaves*, *occaſion'd by their Oppreſſions, as* Diodorus *alſo mentions, might cauſe* Manethos *to omit the reſt, eſpecially* Sabachus *an* Æthiopian, *and an Uſurper.* But whatever account is to be given of the *Ægyptian* Hiſtory in that particular, this makes the Hiſtory of that Nation in general very uncertain, and may afford a ſufficient Reaſon, why the *Jews* are either omitted, or miſrepreſented by Heathen Hiſtorians, who had what they relate of them from the *Ægyptians*; and the *Hebrews* neither liv'd with the *Ægyptians*, nor left them, upon ſuch terms, as to have their Story faithfully told by a Nation, who would ſuffer nothing to paſs down to Poſterity, if they could help it, that was diſpleaſing to them, when it happen'd, but if any thing were ſo notorious, as not to be capable of being wholly ſtifled, they would

[d] Herod. lib. ii. c. 128.
[e] Diodor. Sic. l. 1. Greaves Pyramidograph.

be

be ſure to vary and deface it with falſe Circumſtances in the Reports, which they gave out concerning it.

And here I muſt once more complain of Mr. *Blount*, who, as if he had been an *Ægyptian* Hiſtorian, that had an implacable Hatred of our Religion, profeſſing to tranſlate that place of *Tacitus*, which concerns the Original of the *Jews*, cuts his Tranſlation ſhort, and goes no farther than the vilifying and falſe part of the Account, which *Tacitus* gives: for his Character of their Religion, and the Relation of what *Pompey* diſcover'd upon his Entrance into the Temple, is omitted. And beſides, that which he has tranſlated, is far from being exact: but as I obſerv'd before, that in ſpeaking of the Ark, he had made Sir *Thomas Brown* ſay, that *will not appear feaſible*, which the Learned Knight had ſaid, *will appear feaſible*; ſo he has dealt no better with *Tacitus*, making him likewiſe deny what he had affirm'd: *Tacitus* [f] ſays, *Hi ritus, quoquo modo inducti, antiquitate defenduntur: Theſe Rites, by what means ſoever introduced, are defended by their Antiquity.* Which [g] Mr. *Blount* tranſlates thus: *But by what means ſoever they have been introduc'd, they have no Antiquity for their Patronization.* This is to uſe the Hiſtory of *Tacitus* as ill as he doth that of the Bible, and much worſe than *Tacitus* himſelf has done the *Jews*. For if it be rightly underſtood, what *Tacitus* has written of the *Jews* proves a

[f] Tacit. Hiſt. l. v. [g] *Oracl. of Reaſon*, p. 132.

very

very remarkable Vindication of their Religion. He ſays indeed that they conſecrated the Image of an Aſs, but he ſays it only as a Report, which he confutes afterwards himſelf by acknowledging, that *Pompey*, when he entred into the Temple, found no Image in it; and giving an Account of their Religion, he ſays: *Ægyptii pleraque animalia, effigieſque compoſitas venerantur. Judæi mente ſolâ, unumque numen intelligunt. Profanos, qui Deum imagines mortalibus materiis, in ſpecies Hominum effingunt. Summum illud, æternum, neque mutabile, neque interiturum. Igitur nulla ſimulachra urbibus ſuis, nedum templis ſunt.* Which is ſo contrary to what this Hiſtorian writes before in theſe words, *Effigiem animalis, quo monſtrante, errorem ſitimque depulerunt, penetrali ſacravere*; that ſome have charg'd him with contradicting himſelf: But it is evident, that the Story of their worſhipping an Aſs, is related as a Tradition, which is afterwards ſufficiently confuted by his own Account of their Doctrine and Worſhip, and by what *Pompey* found, *Nullâ nitus Deum effigie, vacuam ſedem, & inania arcana.* Whatever his Deſign was, and however his obſcure way of writing has made him to be miſunderſtood, there can hardly be any thing ſaid more for the Truth and Honour of the *Jewiſh* Religion, than what *Tacitus* has deliver'd of it.

And if any one will compare that which *Tully* hath ſaid in the ſame [h] Oration of the *Greeks*

[h] Pro Flacco.

and of the *Jews*, he muſt conclude, that what is ſpoken againſt the *Jews*, is rather to their Commendation, than to their Diſgrace. *Tully* there declares the *Greeks* to be of no Credit nor Eſteem, but unfaithful, and of the worſt Reputation, even to a Proverb in their Teſtimonies and Oaths. He is careful not to involve the *Athenians* and *Lacedæmonians* in the common Scandal, who appear'd for his Client, and gives a high Character of the *Maſſilians*, and would ſeem to confine his Diſcourſe to the *Aſiatick Greeks*, by whoſe own Confeſſion, he ſays, the People of *Phrygia*, *Myſia*, *Caria*, and *Lydia* were proverbially infamous. When he has expreſs'd this Contempt of the *Greeks*, he falls next upon the *Jews*: But what has he to ſay of them? He calls their Religion a barbarous Superſtition, and *Jeruſalem* a ſuſpicious and railing City, and he pronounces the *Jewiſh* Religion to be unſuitable to the Splendor and Gravity, and the Cuſtoms of the *Romans*; he inſinuates that they were a People not well affected to the *Roman* State, and urges the Conqueſt of them by *Pompey*, as an Argument againſt the Truth of their Religion. When ſo very Learned an Orator had nothing but theſe common Topicks of Slander to charge them withal, tho' it was for the Intereſt of his Cauſe to ſpeak the worſt he knew of them; what could be a greater Juſtification of the *Jews* and their Religion? One of the Accuſations laid againſt *Flaccus*, whoſe Defence *Tully* had undertaken, was, that Sums of Gold having been wont to be ſent out

of

of *Italy*, and out of all the *Roman* Provinces to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, *Flaccus* had forbidden any to be exported from *Aſia*. Here it concern'd *Tully* to expoſe the Worſhip of the *Jews*, and to vindicate the Prohibition relating to it; but he, who never ſpoke little upon any Subject, that could afford a Scope for his Eloquence, ſays ſo little here to the diſpraiſe of the *Jews* and their Religion, that the Commendation of another had been leſs to their Honour. It is obſervable, that *Tully* mentions nothing of their Worſhipping an Aſs, which was ſo groundleſs and fooliſh a Slander, that it is hard to imagine what could give occaſion to it; and perhaps no better Account of it can be aſſigned, than that the Enemies of their Religion were reſolved to faſten the worſt and moſt ridiculous Falſhood they could upon it. But if it may be permitted me to add a Conjecture to thoſe which have been made by others, it ſeems probable, that the higheſt degree of Excommunication among the *Jews* being ſtyled *Shammatha*, which is the ſame with *Maran-Atha*, *Sham* ſignifying *Lord*, as [1] *Maran* alſo doth in the *Syriac* and other Languages, and *Atha* ſignifying *cometh*; *Atha* might either ignorantly or maliciouſly be miſtaken for *Athon*, which ſignifies an *Aſs*. And it is likely, that this Calumny might be firſt raiſed by ſome body, who had been Excommunicated, and turned Apoſtate, in *Heliopolis*, or ſome other part of

[1] Vid. Grot. & Ham. ad 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Ægypt; for *Apion* was the first that vented it: and the *Jewish* Temple, in *Heliopolis*, being [k] denominated from its Founder, *Onias* the High Priest; that might give some countenance to this pretence, as if it had taken its Name from Ὄνος, an *Ass*, and had been from thence called Ὀνεῖον, as the Temple of *Astaroth* is in the Version of the LXXII. Ἀσταρτεῖον, 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 10. and by [l] *Josephus*; denoting the Images of Sheep, which were worshipped by the *Sidonians* and *Philistines*, as *Buxtorf* observes from *Kimchi*.

But I must here observe, that *Fabricius*, in his *Codex Apochryphus*, imagines me to suppose, that *Shammatha*, or *Maran Atha*, was changed into *Athon*: which indeed is very unlikely, but that *Atha* should, by mistake, or by design, be changed into *Athon*, and *Shammatha*, or *Maran Atha*, into *Maran Athon*, or *Shammathon*, is not improbable for the Reasons alledged.

It would be a very wrong Inference from what has been said, to conclude, that there is no certainty in the Greek and Latin, and other Heathen Historians: For the Circumstances of the Relation, and the Consent of divers Authors, may put most parts of History past doubt. But it ought to be considered, that those which have been mentioned, are Exceptions, to which the Sacred Historians are by no means liable; they do not charge one another with Falshood,

[k] Προστάξε τῷ Λόπῳ ἢ ἐν τῇ Ὀνίᾳ καλουμένου νεὼν καθελεῖν ἢ ἰουδαίων. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 3.

[l] Antiq. lib. vi. fin.

nothing

nothing can be diſcovered of Partiality in their Writings, but they tell the moſt diſgraceful Truths of their Anceſtors, and of themſelves; and the Hiſtory it ſelf has ſo many publick Circumſtances, that they clear it beyond all ſuſpicion of Deceit. If the Names of ſome Men be omitted, upon particular occaſions, in the Scriptures, we find them mentioned there upon others. And there is evident Reaſon, that the Names of infamous Men ſhould in ſome Caſes be omitted, and ſhould not be inſerted in Genealogies, and enrolled in the Regiſters of Honour. But when the Memory of Perſons and Actions is totally ſuppreſs'd, this muſt extremely abate the Credit of any Hiſtory. The *Jews* are the only People in the World, that have had their Antiquities by an uninterrupted Tradition delivered down and preſerved in an Authentick Book, unanimouſly aſſerted by the whole Nation, in all Ages, which they have never changed nor altered, but have in great numbers ſacrificed their Lives in Teſtimony of it. If the Heathens in divers things contradict the Hiſtory of the *Jews*, they contradict one another as much in the Accounts of their own Antiquities; and what they relate of the *Jews*, is upon uncertain and contrary Reports. If they conceal what concerns the *Jews*, it was their Cuſtom to ſtifle that which did not pleaſe them. In the Tranſlation made by the *Jews*, at the command of a King of *Ægypt*, or however, well known, and in conſtant uſe in *Ægypt*, nothing relating to the *Ægyptians* is omitted;

and *Joſephus* has ſhewn, how little the *Ægyptians* were able to diſprove any particular, wherein they found their Nation concerned. The Hiſtories, as well as the Religion of moſt other Nations, were kept ſecret, and not communicated to the People; no Book of Hiſtory among them was ever put into the hands of a whole Nation, with a ſtrict Charge to every one to read and ſtudy it, as the Books of *Moſes* were, when the principal and moſt memorable Things related, were within the knowledge and memory of all that read them. The *Jews* were under a neceſſity of preſerving their Genealogies, with all imaginable Care and Exactneſs, if they would make good the Claim and Title to their Inheritances, ſo that the meaneſt among them could with the greateſt certainty derive his Line from *Adam*; whereas the *Perſian* Kings, as we learn from [m] *Herodotus*, could boaſt but of a ſhort Deſcent; and the Kings and Emperors of the *Romans*, and of other Nations, to advance their Pedigrees, were forced to have recourſe to fabulous Reports. And the Heathen Accounts of the Original, not only of particular Families, but of the ſeveral Nations of the World, are acknowledged to be Fabulous, or, at the beſt, but very uncertain, by the moſt accurate Hiſtorians.

The Account of the Prophecies and Miracles contained in the Scriptures, was impoſſible to be miſtaken at firſt, and it has been tranſmitted

[m] Herod. lib. vii. c. 11.

with

with all the certainty that any Hiſtory is capable of, to Poſterity. And the Writers of the Old and New Teſtament all agree in the Account of the Creation, of the Deluge, of *Abraham* and the other Patriarchs, of the Bondage of the *Iſraelites* in *Ægypt*, their Miraculous Deliverance from thence, and their Journying into the Land of *Canaan*; they all frequently aſſert, ſuppoſe or imply the Truth of theſe things; there is a continued Series and Line of Truth obſervable throughout the whole Scriptures. But among Heathen Writers it is otherwiſe; they contradict one another in Matters of any conſiderable Antiquity; if they agree in ſome material Paſſages, it is commonly with much variation in the Circumſtances, and with great Uncertainty and Doubtfulneſs; and the things in which they moſt agree, are ſuch as have been taken from the Scriptures, which compoſe a Book, that if it were but for the Antiquity and Learning of it, is the moſt valuable of any Book in the World, and nothing but Vice and Ignorance, and that which is the worſt ſort of Ignorance, a Pretence to Learning, could make it ſo much deſpiſed.

II. If the Hiſtories of Heathen Nations be ſo little to be rely'd upon, their Philoſophy will appear to be worthy of no more Regard, which, for any thing of Truth and Uſefulneſs there is to be found in it, depends ſo much upon Hiſtorical Traditions. That Poetry is the moſt antient way of Writing, is not only aſſerted by Heathen Authors, but may with great probabi-

lity be made out from the Scripture it ſelf. Poets were the chief Upholders of the Religion and the Philoſophy in uſe among the Heathens; both theſe were at the firſt taught in ſhort Maxims, which, that they might be the better receiv'd, and the more eaſily retain'd in Memory, were put into Verſe, without any farther Ornament than juſt what was neceſſary to give a clear and full Expreſſion to their Notions and Precepts. [n] *Socrates* and the Philoſophers of his time had a value for the Verſes of *Theognis*, and thoſe which go under the Name of *Pythagoras*, are at leaſt as antient as [o] *Chryſippus*, who alledg'd their Authority. *Solon* himſelf wrote Elegies, whereof ſome Remains are ſtill preſerv'd. This gave the Poets a mighty Reputation, and we find not only *Solon*, but others of them quoted and appeal'd to by *Demoſthenes* and *Æſchines* in the Courts of Judicature, as well as by Philoſophers in their Diſcourſes. But the Poets for the more delightful Entertainment of the People, not only indulg'd themſelves in that antient and uſeful way of Inſtruction by Fables (for he [p] was hardly eſteem'd a Poet, who had been the Author of none) but they became the Promoters of all manner of ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Worſhip; the Oracles were deliver'd in Verſe, every Poet wrote ſomething in honour of the falſe Gods, and [q] *Socrates* himſelf, during his Impriſonment,

[n] Xenoph. Conviv. & Memorab. l. i. [o] Apud A. Gell. l. vi. c. 2.
[p] Ἐννοήσας ὅτι ἡ ποιητικὴ θεοί, εἴπερ μέλλοι ποιητὴς εἶναι, ποιεῖν μύθους, ἀλλ' οὐ λόγους, Plat. Phæd. [q] Plat. ib.

made

made a Hymn in praiſe of *Apollo*. By which means the Original Notions of Religion and Vertue were ſo obſcured and corrupted, that it was impoſſible in any humane way to provide a ſufficient Remedy. *Plato* complain'd of the Fictions of Poets; but when he ſet himſelf to recover Men to a true Senſe and Notion of things by the help of ſome antient Traditions, which he had met withal, he fell into very abſurd and ſinful Errors, and both he and *Socrates* practis'd the Idolatries of their Country. They aſſerted many excellent Truths, which they had receiv'd, as they profeſs'd, from Antiquity; but whenever they argu'd any Point, they commonly fell into Miſtakes, which oftentimes were of very ill Conſequence. So weak a thing is Humane Wiſdom without the Guidance of Divine Revelation! And of this the Philoſophers were ſo ſenſible, that divers of them would have it thought, that they had ſome ſupernatural Aſſiſtance, tho' they were able to bring no ſufficient Proof of it.

The Pretences of others deſerve no Regard; their Impoſtures were too notorious to admit of any Denial or Excuſe. The Genius of *Socrates* may be ſuppos'd Worthy of more Conſideration: yet it amounts to no more than this, that *Socrates* declared, that a certain Genius had accompany'd him from his Childhood, which often forbad him to do what he had deſign'd, but never put him upon doing of any thing; and by the Information of this Genius, he often forewarn'd his Friends of the ill Succeſs of

what they were about to undertake. But after the beſt Search I have been able to make concerning this Genius of *Socrates*, I cannot but look upon it as an intricate and perplext Buſineſs. [r] *Gaſſendus* endeavours to prove at large, that it was only an Artifice and Pretence, to gain the greater Credit to his Doctrine. It may ſuffice in this place to obſerve, that [s] *Xenophon* acquaints us, that when he adviſed with *Socrates*, whether he ſhould follow *Cyrus* in his Expedition, *Socrates* ſent him to the Oracle of *Apollo*, who, he ſaid, was to be conſulted in obſcure and uncertain Affairs; which affords no very advantageous Character either of *Socrates* himſelf, or of his Genius. [t] *Tully* informs us, that *Antipater* the Stoick had made a Collection of ſuch things as *Socrates*'s Genius had diſcover'd to him; but whatever they were, it appears that *Tully* had little regard to them. And this we are ſure of, that all the Philoſophy of *Socrates* ended in nothing but Uncertainties: For when he had juſt before his Death diſcours'd of the State after this Life, the moſt that he could ſay to his Friends in Concluſion, was, [u] that they had a Noble Prize before them, great Hopes, and a glorious Venture, and therefore ought to poſſeſs and charm their Minds with thoſe Thoughts. The Suggeſtions of his Genius ſignify'd little to him, if it left him no better

[r] In Epicur. Moral. Philoſ.
[s] Xenoph. de Expedit. Cyri, lib. iii.
[t] Cic. de Divin. l. i. [u] Plato Phæd.

inſtructed,

inſtructed, as to a future State, in the laſt Moments of his Life.

It muſt be acknowledg'd that *Socrates* made great Improvements in the Moral and uſeful part of Philoſophy: He was of an excellent Underſtanding, loving and belov'd of honeſt Men, and had Courage and Reſolution enough to bear the Affronts and withſtand the Malice of others; he minded none but the practical Doctrines of Philoſophy, and tho' he never had travell'd in ſearch after Learning, as it was the Cuſtom in thoſe Ages for Philoſophers to do, but ſcarce ever ſtirr'd out of *Athens*, yet he knew how to make the beſt uſe of the Notions which were brought to him by thoſe, who had been in foreign Countries. It muſt be confeſs'd, that if *Plato* had not made *Socrates* the Author of things which he had never ſaid, as not only [x] *Xenophon*, but *Socrates* himſelf declared, but had given us as plain an Account of *Socrates*'s Philoſophy, as *Arrian* has of that of *Epictetus*, we might have known more of him than we now are able to do. But from what *Plato* and *Xenophon* have ſaid of *Socrates*, we may be aſſur'd, that he did not refrain from idolatrous Worſhip; nor reject the Heathen Oracles, nor deliver his own Doctrines, without much Uncertainty and Diffidence.

Plato carry'd his Philoſophy to far greater Heights than *Socrates* had done, and the ſublimer parts of it were not to be diſcover'd to the

[x] A. Gell. l. xiv. c. 3. Diog. Laert. in Platon.

Vulgar;

Vulgar; which were ſo difficult, that he declares to [y] *Dionyſius*, that Men of great Abilities, and as great Application and Induſtry, after the Study of Thirty Years, at laſt, with much ado, underſtood them. [z] One of *Plato*'s Acquaintance obſerv'd, that moſt that apply'd themſelves to the Study of his Philoſophy, when they were young, could hardly get to underſtand it in their old Age: which he illuſtrated by an odd Compariſon from a Jeſt of *Antiphanes*, of Words ſpoken in a certain City in Winter, that were frozen, and never heard, but upon a Thaw the next Spring. Some things were not to be written at all, or ſo obſcurely as not to be intelligible, if they ſhould fall into the hands of Men, who were not fit to be truſted with the Secret of them; and he acknowledgeth that his beſt and only ſure Argument for the Immortality of the Soul, without the Knowledge of which, all Philoſophy can be but of little worth, was from [a] antient and ſacred Tradition. The Notions and Traditions, which *Plato* had brought from other Countries, with his delightful way of ſetting them forth, gain'd him great Reputation; ſome Attempts were made by himſelf and thoſe of his Sect, to bring his Laws into practice, and to erect a Commonwealth after the Model of them; his Name and Memory was had in great Eſteem, his Birth-day was kept, and the Solemnity of it was renew'd about two hundred Years ago, by ſome of his Admirers,

[y] Epiſt. 2. [z] Plutarch. de Profectu Virtut. [a] Epiſt. 7.

as we are told by [b] *Ficinus*, one of that Society. But there is too much Alloy found in his Philoſophy for any Endeavours to gain it a conſtant and general Reception. His Errors in ſome Caſes are ſo notoriouſly groſs and ſcandalous, that [c] *Serranus* ſets over againſt them in the Margin, *Prima inſania hominis delirantis*, and *Portentoſa inſania.*

[d] *Ariſtotle* had ſtudy'd twenty Years under *Plato*, but he ſo often confutes and contradicts his Maſter, that he has been charg'd with Ingratitude for it. And if *Socrates* and *Plato* did not firmly believe the Soul's Immortality, *Ariſtotle* believ'd the contrary, as [e] many have prov'd out of ſeveral places in his Works. [f] His *Will* ſhews that he was both in his Practice and Judgment for the Idolatries of his Country. [g] *Ariſtotle* alledg'd the Obſcurity of his Philoſophy in excuſe to *Alexander*, who was diſpleas'd, that ſome of his Books ſhould be made publick; he anſwer'd, that they were publiſh'd, and not publiſh'd, becauſe they could not be underſtood. [h] Which *Avicenna* found to be very true, when he had read *Ariſtotle*'s Metaphyſicks forty times over, and afterwards got them by Heart, and then in Deſpair of ever apprehending the Senſe of them, laid them aſide; tho' afterwards, by the help of a Book of *Albumazar Alpharabius*, he perſuaded himſelf,

[b] Comment. in Conviv. Plat. de Amore, c. i. [c] Vid. Plat. de Repub. l. v. Serran. Edit. [d] Origen. contra Celſ. l. ii. [e] Vid. Jac. Billium in Greg. Nazianz. Or. 33. [f] Diog. Laert. [g] Aul. Gell. l. xx, c. 4. [h] Pet. Caſtellan. Vit. illuſtr. Medic. p. 138.

that

that he underſtood them. His Books by an Accident lay conceal'd, till a little before they were brought to *Rome*, upon the taking of *Athens* [i] by *Sylla*. But they were known to few Philoſophers in [k] *Tully*'s time, And a Learned Author has given an account, what their Fate has been ſince.

The Sect of the Stoicks is obſerv'd by *Joſephus* in the account of his own Life, to have been like that of the Phariſees: which [l] *Grotius* ſays, is no wonder, ſince in *Cyprus*, which was *Zeno*'s Native Country, there were always many *Jews*. But if the Stoicks were at firſt indebted to the *Jews*, they certainly afterwards borrow'd much more from the Chriſtians. This Sect was very numerous, and had Men of great Note in the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity, who did not loſe the Opportunity offer'd them of improving it. But the Philoſophers then began to carry on a Joint-Intereſt, and thoſe who denominated themſelves from any particular Sect, were no longer ſtrict in adhering nicely to its Principles. For upon the preaching of the Goſpel to the World, the Philoſophers thought it concern'd them to review all that had been formerly written, to unite their Forces, and ſelect thoſe Notions out of every Sect, which were moſt plauſible, omitting ſuch as they ſaw would then give Offence: and it appears that they were greatly beholden to the Religion which they

[i] Strabo lib. xiii. Plut. in Sylla.
[k] Cic. Topic.
[l] Grot. ad Matt. xxii. 23.

oppoſed

oppoſed and pretended to deſpiſe; it is evident, that they had read the Scriptures, and do ſometimes make uſe of Terms which they had taken from thence, unknown to former Philoſophers. But Philoſophy after all their Endeavours ſtill retaining many Errors, and wanting that Evidence and Authority, which is the Foundation of all true Religion, could never maintain its Ground againſt that Religion, which was preached by thoſe, whom they contemn'd as ignorant Men; but which in a ſhort time wrought ſuch a Reformation in the World, as the Philoſophy of all Ages had been never able to effect.

It is not to be deny'd, that there were many great and eminent Examples among the Heathen, but then there were always as great Enormities allow'd in the moſt civiliz'd Nations. Philoſophy was [m] prohibited by three of the Principal States of *Greece*, by the *Thebans*, the *Spartans*, and the *Argives*. And the *Romans*, who have ſet ſo many Famous Examples to the World, were little oblig'd to Philoſophy: for all their Worth and Greatneſs was raiſed upon the Stock only of common Notions, the Traditions that they had receiv'd with the reſt of Mankind, and the Laws brought from *Athens*, which were enacted by *Solon*, who had been in *Ægypt* at a time, when the *Jews* were there in ſufficient Numbers. But it was a long while before Philoſophers were ſuffered at *Rome*, they had been

[m] Tertul. Apol. c. 47.

[n] expell'd by the Senate: *Tully* was the first that brought Philosophy into any Credit there, and by the Apologies which he often makes for his giving himself to the Study of it, we may perceive under what Prejudices it then lay among the *Romans*, and that there was need of all his Wit and Eloquence to gain it Admission.

A strict Discipline both in Peace and War, great Application and Industry, by which they improved their common Notions, and arriv'd to wonderful Experience and Dexterity in the Management of Affairs, a zealous Love of their Country, and an unparallel'd Constancy, manifest in all their Actions, and especially in the Observation of their Laws, raised the *Romans* to that mighty Height and Extent of Empire. But that which they retain'd of Truth, in relation to Matters of Religion, had been so abused and disguised with Fabulous Corruptions, that at length it had generally lost all Belief amongst them. [o] *Tully* made no Scruple at a publick Tryal in a Court of Judicature, to deny the Punishments of the Wicked in a future state, as a ridiculous Fiction; which shews a strange Corruption of Principles in that Age, when he could propose to himself to gain his Cause by speaking in that manner. In another Oration, he says, [p] *Non semper superet vera illa & directa Ratio, vincat aliquando cupiditas, voluptasque rationem.* That this should be spoken in a publick Pleading by one of the Gravest and

[n] A. Gell. lib. xv. c. 11. [o] Pro Cluentio. [p] Pro M. Cælio.

moſt Learned of all the *Romans*, ſhews how little either the Philoſophy which he had ſtudied, or the *Roman* Laws themſelves could do towards the Eſtabliſhment of Vertue, and that the Modeſty of Youth, and the Vertue and Honour of Families, muſt be ſecur'd upon ſome better Principles. Afterwards he adds: *Verùm ſiquis eſt, qui etiam meretriciis Amoribus interdictum juventuti putet, eſt ille quidem valde ſeverus: Negare non poſſum, ſed abhorret non modo ab hujus ſeculi licentia, verùm etiam a Majorum conſuetudine atque conceſſis.* I believe there is ſcarce any Man ſo far loſt to all Shame among Chriſtians, that he would be willing to hear himſelf ſo defended in a Publick Court, or any Judge that would admit of ſuch a Defence: which is a manifeſt Argument of the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, that it lays ſuch a powerful Reſtraint upon Men. But this looſneſs of Manners was the fatal Fore-runner of that horrid and monſtrous Lewdneſs, which afterwards, like a Leproſie, overſpread the *Roman* Empire. The Conſpiracies of that Time, which ſo much endanger'd the State, were contriv'd by Libertines, and no greater Cruelties have ever been committed than by this Sort of Men, when once they have got into Power; as may be ſeen in *Tiberius*, *Caligula*, *Nero*, &c. And *Tully* himſelf, perhaps, might feel the Effects of theſe Encouragements to Vice, being kill'd by a Villain, whoſe Life he had formerly ſaved by that Eloquence, which was ſometimes

times employ'd, as if he had been retain'd againſt Vertue.

It muſt be owned, that *Tully* has in many places of his Works laid down admirable Rules of Vertue, but then it is with little or no regard to ſuch Principles as are the only ſure Foundations of a Vertuous Life, *viz.* the Fear of God, and the Expectation of Rewards or Puniſhments after Death; and ſuch was the defect of his Philoſophy, that he could be poſitive and certain in nothing. *Seneca*, as he profeſſeth, has taken many of his beſt Precepts from *Epicurus*, which, without a due Conſideration had of a God and a Providence, are no better than Prudent Cautions againſt Temporal Evils, either of Body or Mind. *Seneca* many times diverts rather than inſtructs; what he ſays is always fine, but not always ſolid; he dances upon the ſurface, according to *Quintilian*'s Cenſure of him, but ſeldom deſcends to the depth of things; and it were well if that Character, which he has given of *Seneca*'s Style, might not be applyed to his Senſe, *abundat dulcibus Vitiis*, a luſcious Poiſon ſometimes diffuſeth it ſelf in his Writings. [q] *Seneca* derides the ſubtilty and trifling both of *Zeno* and *Chryſippus*; but he did, it ſeems, think himſelf more concern'd to expoſe them for being ill Diſputants, than for being Teachers of ill Doctrines: tho' upon this account they were ſo very ſcandalous, that [r] *Sextus Empericus* endea-

[q] Sen. Epiſt. 82. de Benefic. lib. 1. c. 3, 4.
[r] Sext. Empir. Pyrrh. Hypot. lib. 3. c. 24, 25.

vours

vours to prove from their Words, that there is no real and certain Difference betwixt Vertue and Vice.

The bare knowledge of the Chriſtian Doctrine, even without a ſincere belief of its Authority, has taught Men to abhor thoſe Crimes which were approved of by the Philoſophers, and practiſed in the wiſeſt Heathen Nations: and when things, notoriouſly Evil, were receiv'd and taught by thoſe, who did and ſaid ſo many things well, it is evident, that what was good was not owing ſo much to the ſtrength of their own Reaſon, as to ſome higher Principle. I will here give but one Inſtance, and it ſhall be concerning the lawfulneſs of killing Infants, or expoſing them to be ſtarved or deſtroyed. This was the Expreſs Doctrine of [s] *Plato*; and *Ariſtotle*, who contradicts him in moſt other things, follows him in this. Indeed, this was ſo general a Practice, [t] that it is taken particular notice of, that the *Thebans* had a Law to forbid it. [u] *Romulus* made a Law to regulate this Practice, and to hinder it in ſome Caſes. [x] *Tacitus* obſerves it as a thing deſerving his Remark, that this was not practiſed either by the *Jews* or the *Germans*, tho' the latter had a Cuſtom of caſting their Children into the *Rhine* for a tryal of their Legitimacy. But that which is more ſtrange, is, that [y] *Seneca* and *Plutarch*,

[s] Plat. de Repub. lib. v. Ariſtot. Polit. lib. vii. c. 16.
[t] Ælian. lib. ii c. 7. [u] Dionyſ. Halicarn. lib. ii.
[x] Tacit. Hiſt. lib. v. & de Morib. Germ. cum notis Lipſ.
[y] Senec. de Ira, lib. i. c. 15. Plut. in Lycurg.

who liv'd ſince the Preaching of the Goſpel, ſhould approve of ſuch Barbarous Cruelty. [z] *Hierocles*, who, as *Lactantius* informs us, was well acquainted with the Scriptures, was contented to ſay, that it is natural and anſwerable to the Ends of Marriage to bring up all, or at leaſt, moſt Children; which was a great Conceſſion in a Philoſopher. *Solon*, who was as Famous for his Philoſophy as for his Laws, and the Legiſlator to that State, which was the Seat and proper Soil, as it were of Philoſophy, by an expreſs Law [a] indemnified all that killed their Children, and the Philoſophers were ever true to theſe Principles.

I have inſiſted upon this the more, not only becauſe it is an evident inſtance of the inſufficiency of Heathen Philoſophy, but becauſe ſome Readers may be as difficult to believe a thing, which muſt needs ſeem very Monſtrous to Chriſtians, as [b] *Lipſius*'s Friend was, to whom he wrote a long Epiſtle, to convince him that this was the Practice of Heathen Nations, and agreeable to the Judgment of their Philoſophers: So that many of the Adverſaries of the Chriſtian Faith, may perhaps owe their Lives to that Religion which they Blaſpheme.

I have purpoſely avoided too curious an Enquiry into the Lives of the Philoſophers, and rather choſe to caſt a Veil over what not only their Enemies but their Friends have ſaid of

[z] Fragm. apud Stobæ. Serm. 73.
[a] Sext. Empiric. Pyrrh. Hypot. lib. iii. c. 24.
[b] Ad Belgas, Cent. 1. Epiſt. 85.

them. The Practice of Men is generally worſe than they confeſs it ought to be; they never live above their Rule and Profeſſion; it is well, if in moſt things they do not fall much ſhort of it; and if their Principles be bad, what muſt we expect from their Examples? But the Actions of the Philoſophers concerned thoſe with whom they lived, our Buſineſs is with their Writings; and I need not fear the Cenſures of Learned and Judicious Men in any thing I have ſaid of them; for they will acknowledge it to be Truth, and others ought to be told ſo, that they be no longer willing to change the Bible for the Works of Philoſophers, which they commonly read and underſtand as little as they do the Bible it ſelf.

The utmoſt that Philoſophy could reach, was no farther than to uncertain Hopes and doubtful Arguments. But our Saviour and his Apoſtles *taught with Authority*, and not as did the Philoſophers; *The Words which they ſpake, they were Spirit, and they were Life*; They came with full Power, and had their Credentials from Heaven to produce, which are the ſame that we now alledge for the Authority of their Commiſſion. And what can be more certain than plain Matter of Fact, which is clearly prov'd by undeniable Circumſtances, and by Witneſſes beyond Exception, and which is of that Nature, that all the Divine Attributes are engag'd for the Truth of it? It is ſtrange that Men ſhould pretend to fetch their Infidelity from the Depths of Philoſophy, and the *Oracles of Reaſon*; as if

any floating, confus'd Notions, might not ſerve for Objections. But it is to the advantage of a bad Cauſe, to involve it in tedious and unneceſſary Diſputes, to make Digreſſions into doubtful Points of Criticiſm and Philoſophy, to amuſe the Reader, and draw him off from the main Queſtion: Whereas a good Cauſe may commonly be brought to a clear and ſhort Iſſue. The preſent Controverſie will admit of all kinds of Learning, but has no need of it. My Buſineſs therefore has been to free this Matter, as much as may be, from all the Intricacies of Learning, to reduce it to plain Circumſtances of Fact, whereof every Man may be capable of making a true Judgment, and to bring it to that very Caſe, in which St. *John* argues; *He that believeth not God, hath made him a Lyar, becauſe he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son*, 1 John v. 10. But, *he that hath received his Teſtimony, hath ſet to his Seal that God is true*, 1 John iii. 33.

And how can we forbear to adore the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, who, by the wonderful Diſpenſations of his Providence, has not ſuffered himſelf to be *without Witneſs* in any Age or Nation? If Idolatry ſpread it ſelf from *Egypt* into many other Parts of the World, as [c] *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus* have ſhewn, we have the more reaſon to admire the Wiſdom of Divine Providence, in appointing *Egypt* to be the place where the People of *Iſrael* did ſo

[c] Herod. lib. ii. c. 43, &c. Diod. Sicl. lib. I.

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long ſojourn, and where ſo many ſignal Miracles were wrought to give a check and ſtop to Idolatry in the very Source and Fountain of it, if Men had not been beyond all meaſure obſtinate in their Folly and Diſobedience.

And the ſame Goodneſs of God has not been wanting to any Nation of the World. For, [d] tho' the Law of *Moſes* was peculiarly deſigned for the People of *Iſrael*, yet proviſion was made for the receiving of all ſuch as were willing to become partakers of it, to the obſervation even of their ceremonial and typical Service; none beſides the *Iſraelites* were required to obſerve it, but neither were any excluded from it. And by the conſtitution of the *Jewiſh* Law and Government, as well as by the Providence of God in all his Diſpenſations towards that People, effectual Care was taken that all the neceſſary Points of Religion, which concern Mankind in general, ſhould by them be communicated to the reſt of the World. But the Chriſtian Religion was, by its original Inſtitution and Deſign, equally extended to all Nations, and was ſoon propagated all over the World. Nations but lately known to us, have been conſtant Objects of the Divine Care, and had early Diſcoveries made to them of the reveal'd Will of God, as I have proved at large by the Teſtimonies of Proteſtants as well as of Papiſts. And it is very ob-

[d] Οὐδὲ γὰρ διὰ Ἰουδαίους μόνους ὁ νόμος ἦν, ἐδὲ δι' αὐτοὺς μόνους οἱ προφῆται ἐπέμποντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἰουδαίων ἐδιώκοντο. πάσης γὰρ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἦν τὸ διδασκαλεῖον ἱερὸν τῆς περὶ θεοῦ γνώσεως, καὶ τῆς κατ' ψυχὴν πολιτείας. St. Athan. de Incarnatione Verbi Dei.

ſervable, which [e] *Varenius* has remark'd, that the *Jeſuits, in ſome places at leaſt,* have preach'd the Subſtance of Chriſtianity without the Mixture of many of thoſe Doctrines, which are peculiar to the *Roman* Communion; and he owns that their Succeſs has been very great.

III. It [f] was the Opinion of a converted Mandarin, *That thoſe who had any occaſion to hear the Law of God, or to read the Books which treat of it, and did not judge it to be true, wanted Brains, and were void of Underſtanding.* And it might well be thought incredible, if we did not find it true in Experience, that when Chriſtianity has gain'd ſo much upon Heathens, and [g] *Turks* have become its Proſelytes and Martyrs, even in *Conſtantinople* it ſelf; it ſhould notwithſtanding grow into Contempt among profeſs'd Chriſtians, who diſpute every Article of the Faith into which they were baptized, and every Commandment, which they have undertaken, and ſolemnly vow'd to obey.

But do they not prove what they pretend? As little of that as may be; but they ſay it, and ſay it often and confidently, and perhaps ſometimes wittily, and this muſt paſs for Proof. But do Men love, or will they endure to be talked or jeſted out of any thing that is dear to them but their Souls? Let the Wit be what they pleaſe, or can fancy it to be, certainly they muſt be much too fond of it who can be con-

[e] Varen. de Relig. in Regn. Japan. c. v.
[f] Semed. *Hiſt. of* China, Pt ii. c. 13.
[g] Ricaut. *Hiſt. of the Ottom. Emp.* l. ii. c. 11, 12.

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tented to loſe not only their beſt Friend, but Heaven it ſelf for a Jeſt, which perhaps, after all, would be little taken notice of on another Subject, and has nothing to recommend it but Profaneneſs, and that alone which ſhould make it abhorr'd, cauſeth it to be admired.

As there is nothing ſo bad but ſome may pretend to ſpeak for it, (as a Panegyrick has been written upon *Buſiris*, and another upon *Nero*) ſo nothing is ſo excellent but it may be ſpoken againſt; and if no Right or Title muſt be allow'd as true or certain, which may be queſtion'd or diſputed, it is hard to ſay what any Man can have that he may call his own. But let it be conſider'd that there is little Learning or Judgment required in advancing or maintaining new and ſtrange Doctrines, and in rejecting the old. Things may be ſo plain, as for that very Reaſon to be hard to prove, becauſe there is nothing plainer to prove them by. A bold Denial of the Truth of our Senſes and Faculties may ſeem to promiſe ſomething of more than ordinary Subtilty; tho' there be no more in it than this, that he who reſolves to deny the very Grounds and Foundations of all Reaſoning, has taken effectual care not to be confuted. It is a Miſtake to think that it is eaſieſt to ſpeak upon a common Subject; a Man indeed can never want ſomething to ſay upon ſuch a Subject, but he is prevented in what he ſhould ſay, it is known before-hand, and expected from him: The niceſt thing of all is to enforce and improve known Arguments, and to

give new Life, and a better Genius, as it were, to that which has been ſaid a thouſand times before. It is uſually eaſieſt to diſcourſe on the wrong ſide of a Queſtion, becauſe there never is ſo little ſcope for Fancy and Invention, as when a Man is confined to ſtrict Truth; Error will admit of all Extravagancies, but Truth is a ſevere and uniform thing, and there are thoſe whom any Extravagancy almoſt will pleaſe, for the Novelty of it. There may be ſome Art required to make a known Story delightful in the relating, but News is commonly welcome, tho' it be never ſo ill told; and the moſt beautiful and uſeful Creatures are little regarded, when the worſt of Monſters are the more gazed at the more they be deform'd. Let thoſe who make ſuch a Noiſe with their Singularity, but change the Subject, and try how it will ſucceed with them, they will ſoon find the Difference, and perceive that they will ceaſe to be in vogue, when they have no longer the Vanity and Ill-nature, and Vices of Men on their ſide.

It is with our Minds in this reſpect, as it is with our Bodies, when once they are well ſupply'd with all that is neceſſary or convenient, they begin to loath wholſome Food, and to ſeek out for Varieties of Luxury, and are fond of any thing that may pleaſe them to their Hurt. It is thus in every Art and Science, eſpecially in ſuch as all Men think themſelves more or leſs concern'd to know. Men firſt were contented to ſpeak ſo as to be underſtood, and to expreſs their Meaning plainly and naturally with Truth

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and Simplicity to one another; afterwards ſpeaking became an Art, and at laſt in the beſt and moſt elegant Languages, it degenerated into nothing but Affectation, and all the Ridiculouſneſs of a falſe Eloquence. The ſame thing happen'd in Philoſophy; the *Scepticks* carry'd this innovating Humour to the utmoſt Extravagancy, for the Primitive Traditions being obſcured and corrupted, and every Succeſſion of Philoſophers ſtriving to ſet up for themſelves, and to outgo each other, they had brought it to that paſs, that *Tully*, who knew as well as any Man, ſays, that nothing can be more abſurd than what ſome of the Philoſophers held. But the Author of the *Leviathan* proceeds farther, and obſerves, that [h] *no Living Creature is ſubject to the Privilege of Abſurdity but Man only, and of Men, thoſe are of all moſt ſubject to it that profeſs Philoſophy.* And if we will not believe him upon his word, he has given us his Example for it; few Men, I think, having written more extravagant things than he has done in every part of Philoſophy; if Religion were ſet aſide, he would never have eſcaped among the Philoſophers and Mathematicians of any Age; he diſputed the Principles of Geometry, as well as the Foundations of all Religion, and both with a like Succeſs. He calls *Abſurdity* the Privilege of Mankind; a ſtrange Privilege! which he has made the moſt of. But ſince with a little time the Novelty and

[h] Leviath. P^t j. c. 5.

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Varniſh of his odd Opinions are worn off, they are not now, that I have perceiv'd, ſo much regarded, but have been forced to give way to other Notions which are as bad, and have nothing more to recommend them, but that they are of a later Date and a newer Faſhion.

There is little Reaſon why any one ſhould value himſelf for talking againſt receiv'd Doctrines, and perſuading others to what they are already but too much inclin'd. But to reſcue antient and deſpiſed Truths, and bring them into Reputation; to convince the Judgments, and gain the Affections of Men; to make the ſame Truths always pleaſe and always appear with a new and amiable Luſtre; this is indeed a difficult Task. For a Man to cultivate the Principles of Vertue, and improve the Growth of it, to make every Subject which he treats of, to become the better for him, and to thrive and flouriſh under his Hands, is an Argument of true Learning and ſubſtantial Knowledge; but there is no Skill required to make the Weeds of Vice grow apace; all the Art is in deſtroying them, and it is a ſign of a little Mind when one is able to diſtinguiſh himſelf only by Singularity, by an odd Dreſs, or a new Mode, when his Wit borders upon Madneſs and Prophaneneſs, and his Learning is all out of the way. Many who are neither Heterodox in Religion, nor fond of being ſingular in any thing elſe, have ſhewn an extraordinary Sagacity, and a ſurprizing Variety of excellent Learning upon

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Subjects which are unuſual and in themſelves but little conſiderable. And I will not deny but that ſome of the Men of Singularity have no worſe Deſign than to gratify a little Vanity, and to appear like Somebody in the *Commonwealth of Learning*, as if Learning were a mere Trifle, a very Play-thing, to be employ'd to no ſerious and uſeful purpoſe, but would ſerve only to give Men occaſion to talk, and to be talk'd of. This is call'd *Pedantry*, and I know not why that ſhould go under a better Name, which is of a worſe Nature, and joins the Trifling of Pedantry to the Miſchief of Irreligion. If this ſort of Men would but buſy themſelves no worſe than *Tiberius* did, when he examin'd, who was the Mother of *Hecuba*, what Name *Achilles* went by, whilſt he hid himſelf in Womans Apparel, and what Songs thoſe were, which the *Syrens* were wont to ſing; thoſe indeed are profound Enquiries, and ſo worthy of them, that it were pity they ſhould be diſturb'd in ſuch ingenious Diſquiſitions. But if Men will be for removing Foundations, and rejecting eſtabliſh'd Doctrines, and denying the Principles of Religion; it is fit they ſhould be told that there is neither Wiſdom nor Learning in this; and thoſe who are acted themſelves by a Spirit of Contradiction, have the leaſt Reaſon of any Men to take it amiſs to be contradicted, tho' it be in never ſo plain a manner. In ſhort, it is poſſible that ſome may be well skill'd in Tricks and Artifices, who know little of the ſubſtantial and uſeful Part of the Law, and it is certain,

certain, that many who talk boldly of the higheſt Points of Religion, are ignorant even of *the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt.* There ſurely can be little need for any Man to have recourſe to Error and Extravagancy for the Exerciſe and Improvement of his Faculties, they muſt be ſtrange Faculties to want ſuch Improvement. Truth it ſelf is infinite, tho' always uniform and conſiſtent in every part, and will afford room enough for the free uſe of Reaſon, in examining and conſidering the Nature of things, in ſtating particular Caſes by general Rules, in the Study of Antiquity, and in explaining particular Texts of Scriptures, according to the Analogy of Faith, and the Tenour of ſound Doctrine. And it may juſtly be look'd upon as a Defect of Judgment and good Senſe, or be ſuſpected (which is much worſe) of want of Sincerity and a good Conſcience, when Men can find nothing, by which they may recommend themſelves to the World, but by ſetting up for Novelties in Religion. For what Man of an honeſt Meaning, and of ſufficient Abilities and Strength of Parts, to proceed ſecurely in direct and approved Paths, would run out of the way by Cunning and Artifice, to ſteal a deſpicable Reputation, which another would be aſham'd of, and of which the beſt thing that can be ſaid, is, that, as it is never worth the having, ſo it is never laſting.

After the Reception and Eſtabliſhment of the Goſpel for ſo many Ages, we are call'd upon to prove the Grounds and Principles of our Religion

gion all over again, and we will never decline a thing ſo eaſy to be done. But the Modern Infidels have chang'd the State of the Queſtion: the Truth of the Miracles wrought by our Saviour and his Diſciples was never deny'd by the Adverſaries of Chriſtianity of old; this was not diſputed by *Celſus*, *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, and *Julian* the Apoſtate; if ſome of them did upon any occaſion inſinuate the contrary, that was ſo malicious and groundleſs a Calumny, that they were neither able to inſiſt upon any Proof of it, nor to reconcile it to what they themſelves had elſewhere ſaid. The Matter of Fact was acknowledg'd by the antient *Jews*, and has been confeſs'd by their Poſterity; they could not contradict the Miracles, but deny'd the Conſequence of them: though the Men we have to deal withal, to make clear work, with much Confidence, but with as much Ignorance, deny both. Let them know then, that they are in part confuted by the Enemies of our Religion; and it were ſtrange if its Friends ſhould fail in the other part.

IV. I have here endeavoured to do ſome Right to our Religion, and to ſatisfie all ſuch as are willing to be ſatisfied in the moſt difficult Points of it. And tho' I have diſcourſed at large upon the Subjects of which I treat, and not in the uſual Method of *Objection* and *Anſwer*; yet I have always had my Eye upon the Objections, which I have known, that I could think at all material. But to bring in Objections at every Turn in plain Diſcourſes, ſuch

as theſe were deſign'd to be, as far as the Matter would permit, might have been of no good Conſequence. A Man may very well be guided in the right Road; without having all the wrong and dangerous Paths deſcrib'd to him; and he may be directed how to recover or preſerve his Health, without being preſented with a Catalogue of Diſeaſes; he may get ſafe to his Journeys end, without knowing all the Bogs and Precipices by which he might have miſcarried; and in order to be well, there is no need that he ſhould be acquainted how many ways there are of being ſick. I have heard of ſome that read Objections without the Anſwers; as lately a ſhameleſs Writer has produced the Objections of *Celſus* and *Fauſtus*, againſt the Canon of Scripture, without taking Notice of the Anſwers given by *Origen* and St. *Auſtin*, from whom he had them. And tho' both the Objections and Anſwers ſhould be read, yet Objections are commonly in few Words, and are often remembred, when the Anſwers are forgotten. And indeed, tho' I were never ſo expert at it, I have no Ambition to try my Strength in tying a knot, that I may ſhew my Skill in unlooſing it. But to provide againſt all Exceptions, as much as it is poſſible, I have proved at large, that if all Objections could not be anſwered, this would be no ſufficient Reaſon to reject or queſtion the Authority of our Religion.

I cannot ſay I muſt confeſs, that I have been able, or have been much ſolicitous to obviate all the Cavils which may have been ſtarted, many

ny have been given up, and others ſeem never to have been ſeriouſly urged. An Author who had more Learning it ſeems, than Judgment to ſpare, wrote a Book, to prove that there were Men before *Adam*; but this was rejected by Judicious Men, as a very abſurd and ridiculous Conceit, particularly by *Grotius*, as the Author complains, who yet afterwards retracted it himſelf. Some, notwithſtanding, are ſo fond of any Paradox, that they are ſtill for maintaining it. I confeſs, it agrees admirably with a Tradition of the *Arcadians*, that their Anceſtors were before the Moon; and if any Man ſhould pretend, that this might very well be true, according to the *Carteſian Hypotheſis*, by attempting to prove, that *Arcadia* might be inhabited before the Moon, of a Luminous became an *Opake* Body; in ſo curious an Age, he muſt have ill Luck if he ſhould want his Applauders. If ſome object, that the Originals of the Books of Scripture in the Hand-writing of the ſeveral Authors, are not ſtill remaining; doth this deſerve to be anſwered till they can produce the Original Writings of all other Books? or at leaſt of all or any that are as ancient, as even the laſt written of the Books of the New Teſtament? Would they have an Office erected, to prove the Titles to all Eſtates by Original *Deeds*? and upon what Period of Time will they fix for the Date of them, which will admit of any Compariſon with the Date of the Manuſcript Copies now extant of the Scripture? It has been objected againſt the Hiſtory

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of the Flood, that *America* is divided from all the rest of the World by the Ocean, and that divers Beasts are found there of a different Species from any known in other Parts of the World, which therefore cannot be of any of those Kinds contained in the Ark. But this Objection deserves no Answer, till those that make it, can give an Account of all the Species of Animals in the World, and an exact Description of the Limits of *North America*, and how it borders upon the Sea, or the adjacent Continent. In the mean time, are not Elephants Natives only of *India*, and of some Parts of *Africa*? And are not divers other Animals peculiar to some Countries, and not the natural Breed of other Places on the same Continent?

It is as vain to object, that the Negroes are not descended from *Noah*, unless the Arguments could be confuted, by which it is prov'd, that *Africa* was peopled from *Cham*. *Ægypt* is *the land of Cham*, (Psal. cv. 23, 27.) or *Ham*, the *Jupiter Hammon*: [i] *Chemmis* was a great City of *Thebais*, and the Inhabitants were call'd *Chemmites*, or *Chammites*. [k] *Pliny* says, that *Æthiopia* was denominated from *Æthiops*, the Son of *Vulcan*: which were reasonable to believe, if it could be proved, that there ever was such a Man. And there is the same Reason to think, that the *Æthiopians* are descended from *Cham*, since his Name carries in it the same importance with *Æthiops*: For *Cham* signifies *Hot*,

[i] Herodot. l. ii. c. 19.

[k] Plin. l. vi. c. 30.

and

and *Chum Black*, from *Chamam*, to be *Hot*. [l] *Eupolemus* delivers it as a Tradition among the *Babylonians*, that *Chum* was the Father of the *Æthiopians*, whom, by miſtake, he makes the Son of *Chanaan* the Father of the *Phœnicians*, and the Brother of *Miſtraim*, (or *Mizraim*; in the *Septuagint* Verſion, *Meſrain*, and *Meſraim*,) the Father of the *Ægyptians*: but he ſays, that *Chum* was, by the *Greeks*, called *Asbolus*; that is, *Soot*, *Blackneſs*; and [m] *Chemia*, the ancient Name of *Ægypt*, ſignified *Blackneſs*. *Ægypt*, in the Old Teſtament, has its Name from *Mizraim*, the Son of *Cham*, and *Æthiopia* from *Cuſh*, another of his Sons: *Can* the *Æthiopian* (the *Cuſhite*) *change his Skin*, (Jer. xiii 23.) and theſe *Cuſhites* or *Æthiopians* were far ſpread, and are divided into [n] *Eaſtern* or *Weſtern* by *Homer*, who is followed therein by *Pliny*. From all which it appears, that the People of *Africa* were originally deſcended from *Cham*, and that their Colour was always the ſame. And it may be conſidered, that if the Hairineſs of *Eſau* had deſcended to his Poſterity, it would have diſtinguiſhed them as much from other Men as thoſe of *Cham*'s Poſterity are diſtinguiſh'd by their *Blackneſs*. Some have alledged, that the Sea, through which the *Iſraelites* paſſed, is not Red: But they may be pleaſed to know, that Religion is nothing con-

[l] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evang. l. ix. c. 17.
[m] Plut. de Iſid. & Oſir.
[n] Odyſſ. α. v. 24. Plin. l. v. c. 8. l. viii. c. 32.

cerned in what has been written on both ſides upon this ſubject; for it is not called the *Red Sea* in the *Hebrew*, but the *Sea of Weeds*, with which it abounds. It has the denomination of the *Red Sea* from the Greeks, however it came by it, (for the Criticks are not agreed about it) and is beſt known by that Name, which is therefore made uſe of by the *Septuagint*, and in our own and other Tranſlations, which herein follow St. *Luke* and the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*. Men muſt call things by known Names if they will be underſtood, whatever gave the firſt occaſion to thoſe Names. As to many Objections, let Men but do *Moſes* the ſame Right, which they would do *Thucydides* or *Tacitus*, and we need deſire no more, tho' they ſhould not allow for the great diſtance of Time between them: Indeed, they might live in the ſame Age, for all that many of theſe Objectors know, and be next Neighbours. I have known divers Objections made, which the looking only into the Bible would anſwer, and many proceed from the want of being converſant in it. Some have ſuppoſed, that they had great matter of Objection from Chriſt's Curſing the Fig-tree, and cauſing it to wither away: But never ſo little Reflection might ſerve any one to take notice, how merciful a thing it was in the Son of God, and how ſuitable to the Goſpel which he preach'd, for him to ſhew his Power of puniſhing upon a Tree rather than upon a Man: it was then, and is at any time as eaſie for him to puniſh

puniſh his Revilers, as it was to Curſe this Tree, or as it can be for them to Revile him, tho' they be never ſo ready at it. But to manifeſt himſelf to be the Saviour, not the Deſtroyer of Mankind; He Cured all manner of Diſeaſes, and raiſed the Dead; but never took away the Life of any Man, nor inflicted any Diſeaſe: He ſpared his worſt Enemies, the Scribes and Phariſees, and puniſhed their Hypocriſie in the Emblem only of a Fig-tree flouriſhing in Leaves before the Time and Seaſon of Figs, and thereby promiſing very much and early Fruit, but having none; it made a ſhew of Figs out of Seaſon, but had nothing to anſwer ſo fair an Appearance. This is the Parable of the Fig-tree repreſented in Fact, which we find expreſs'd in Words, *Luke* xiii. 6. and denoted the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, whither our Saviour was then going, for its Unfruitfulneſs and Hypocriſie, *Matth.* xxi. 18.

Other Objections, which may ſeem more conſiderable, have been confuted even to a Demonſtration. Cavils which have been raiſed concerning the [o] Quantity of Space, which will be required to contain the Bodies of all Men at the Reſurrection, and concerning the [p] *Bottomleſs Pit*, have been demonſtrated to be frivolous. That the [q] Capacity of the Ark was ſuffi-

[o] Tacquet. Geometr. Pract. lib. iii. c. 20. Probl. 2.

[p] *Sir* Sam. Morland's *Urim of Conſc.* p. 95.

[q] Buteo de Arca Noe. Kircher de Arc. Noe. *Sir* W. Rawleigh's *Hiſt.* lib. i. c. 7. §. 9. *Biſhop* Wilkin's *Real Character*, Part 2. c. 5.

cient to contain *Noah* and his Family with the Beaſts and Food for them; and that the [r] Increaſe of Mankind might extend to ſo great Numbers in no longer a Compaſs of Years than the Scriptures in any Inſtance aſſign, are things which have been often prov'd beyond any poſſibility of a Confutation; and what ever force there may ſeem to be in Objections of this nature, they are to be reckon'd among the *Vulgar Errors*, and in that Number Sir *Thomas Brown* has placed ſome of them, for Learned Men have been long ago aſham'd to make them; and this, one would think, ſhould cauſe others to be more modeſt and cautious in their Objections againſt the Scriptures, when ſuch as have the Appearance of the greateſt Strength in them, being once brought under ſtrict Examination prove to be evidently falſe. And if they find they have been miſtaken and are willing to be undeceiv'd; this will go ſo far towards their Conviction, that I cannot but hope that the Conſiderations here propoſed, may be of ſome weight with them.

Thus far, methinks, at leaſt, I may hope to prevail upon thoſe who will not be convinced of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, that they will no longer imagine it ſafe or prudent to ſpeak lightly and profanely of it. Religion is too ſerious a thing, and of too great Concernment to Mankind, to be expoſed to the Scorn of

[r] Petav. Doctr. Temp. l. ix. c. 14.

every

every one, that thinks he can make a Jeſt. And that which is too hard for their Reaſon, will be in little danger of their Raillery, but will rather receive an additional Confirmation from it. The beſt and moſt ſacred things are always moſt capable of Diſhonour and Affronts; for to affront and abuſe any Perſon or Thing, is to endeavour to make it appear bad, and it is the Security of ſome things and ſome Men, that they cannot be repreſented worſe than they are. It is in any one's Power to affront the greateſt Prince, and a Man of the moſt eminent Vertue may be moſt eaſily abuſed; but no Treaſon can be ſpoke againſt a Beggar, and it is the hardeſt matter to find out how to diſgrace him of whom nothing can be ſaid worſe than he deſerves. It is a kind of Teſtimony given to Religion, and an Acknowledgment paid to Vertue, when Men ſo induſtriouſly labour to vilify it. For how can that be diſparag'd which is of no Worth or Excellency? Or why ſhould Men endeavour to bring that into Diſcredit, which hath not at preſent a confeſs'd Reputation? Whether this be a deſerv'd Reputation or no, they may queſtion if they think fit, but then let them make it a ſerious Queſtion, and not to be decided by the loudeſt noiſe. But here is the Miſchief, they have no Patience to attend to the Force of an Argument, or to go on with a Diſpute; but a Cavil is ſoon ſtarted, and Objections are more eaſily rais'd than anſwer'd upon any Subject, and then they trample with wonderful Scorn,

and

and triumph upon that which they conceive is ſo miſerably overcome: but alas the Victory is over themſelves; nothing is either the more or the leſs true for their believing or disbelieving it, and Religion is always the ſame, how profanely ſoever it may be ſpoken of.

We have no deſign to impoſe upon any Man's Faith; but if there be Reaſon in what we ſay, it may well be expected from Reaſonable Men, that they ſhould hearken to Reaſon. Religion is Reaſon and Philoſophy, as the Fathers often ſpeak, the beſt and trueſt Philoſophy. And I am perſuaded, how much ſoever I may have fail'd in the Performance, that the Chriſtian Religion is capable of being prov'd with ſuch clear and full Evidence, even to ordinary Underſtandings, as to make all Pretences of arguing againſt it, appear to be as ridiculous as they are impious.

ERRATA.

PRef. pag. 6. Marg. l. 4. r. *Populo.* p. 11. l. 4. r. clxxviii. p. 13. l. 9. (from the bottom) r. *intus.*

Book. pag. 75. l. 7. r. *Jer.* x. 11. p. 89. l. 17. r. *Generation.* p. 103. l. *ult.* r. Epiſtle was. p. 104. l. 1. f. had r. was. p. 134. l. 2. (from bottom) f. have r. hath ſhewn. p. 213. l. 6. r. word. p. 146. Marg. r. *Autolych.* p. 343. l. 21. r. Diſciple. p. 381. l. 7. r. Grace. p. 474. l. 7. (from bottom) r. *Amelius.* p. 484. Marg. r. παυήσυς εἰς Βάβυλ. λογ. β. p. 486. l. 4. r. *Philoponus.* p. 492. l. 2. for lying, r. dying. p. 496. l. 10. r. hath.

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THE REASONABLENESS and CERTAINTY OF THE Chriſtian Religion.

BOOK II.

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Of Humane Reaſon.

HAving in the former Book proved the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, I proceed in this to clear ſuch Points, as are commonly thought moſt liable to exception in the Chriſtian Religion, and to propoſe ſome conſiderations which may ſerve to remove ſuch Prejudices, and obviate ſuch Cavils, as are uſually raiſed againſt the Holy Scriptures. But before Men venture upon making Objections againſt the Scriptures, they would do well firſt to conſider the compaſs and ſtrength of their own Parts and Faculties, and to obſerve in how many things they daily find themſelves deceived; how many Men there are who underſtand much more than themſelves, and how much folly and ignorance there is in the wiſeſt

Men. Thoſe commonly that raiſe Objections againſt the Scriptures, are as confident in the management of them, as if they underſtood all things beſides, and therefore conclude, that muſt needs be falſe, which they do not underſtand; not conſidering, how very reaſonable it is to ſuppoſe, that God ſhould command and reveal many things, the Natures and Reaſons of which we may not be able to comprehend. This muſt be granted by every Man who believes God to be infinitely wiſe, but doth not think himſelf to be ſo, and acknowledgeth God's Sovereignty over him. For as he is infinitely wiſe, he may reveal things above our Capacities; and as he is the ſupream Lord and Governour of the World, he may command us what in his infinite Wiſdom he ſhall ſee fitting, tho' we may not perceive the Reaſon and Deſign of it. And yet this is the utmoſt, that upon a due Examination, many of the Objections againſt the Authority of the Scriptures amount to, that there are ſeveral things in them, of which ſome Men think no clear account can be given, and others, which ſeem to them unworthy of God.

Now, what is the meaning of this way of objecting? and where lies the force of ſuch Arguments but in this, that it is not to be conceived, that God would reveal or command any thing, with which they are not ſatisfied, or which they cannot perfectly underſtand? This is all the ſtrength of this ſort of Objections. There is all the Reaſon in the World to believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, if they did not contain things, which theſe Men in their great Wiſdom think ſhould not be there, if they were his Word; which is to make their own Underſtanding the meaſure and *Criterion* of Divine Revelation. And ſome have turned Scepticks for as good Reaſons, and others have been Atheiſts upon the ſame Principles; finding as much fault with the Syſtem of the World, and the order and contrivance of the Parts of it, as

the Deiſt doth with the Scriptures; they have renounced all Belief of a God, upon the ſame grounds upon which he disbelieves the Chriſtian Religion. To convince Men therefore of the Narrowneſs and Weakneſs of Humane Reaſon, I ſhall ſhew, I. That in ſome things, each ſide of a Contradiction ſeems to be demonſtrable. II. That every Man believes and experiences ſeveral things which in the Theory and Speculative Notion of them, would ſeem as incredible as any thing in the Scriptures can be ſuppoſed to be. III. That thoſe who reject the Myſteries of Religion, muſt believe things much more incredible.

I. In ſome things, each ſide of a Contradiction ſeems to us demonſtrable. Several inſtances might be given of this. I ſhall inſtance only in the diviſibility of Matter. Nothing ſeems more evident than that diviſibility is eſſential to Matter, and that therefore all Matter is diviſible, ſo that the leaſt part of Matter is as diviſible as the biggeſt, becauſe the leaſt Particle of Matter is Matter, that is, it is of the ſame Nature and Eſſence with the whole: and all Matter differs only in Bulk, or Figure, or Place, or Reſt, or Motion. It being then of the Nature of Matter to be diviſible, it muſt ever be diviſible, tho' it be never ſo often divided; ſince it can never be ſo divided, as to loſe its own Nature, or ceaſe to be Matter. On the other ſide, it is demonſtrable that Matter cannot be infinitely diviſible; becauſe, whatever is diviſible is diviſible into Parts, and no Parts can be infinite, becauſe no Number can be ſo. For all Number is neceſſarily in it ſelf capable of being counted or numbred, tho' no Finite Being may be able to number it; a numberleſs Number is a contradiction, it is a Number which is no Number: therefore all Number muſt be even or odd, and muſt be capable of Addition and Subſtraction, which is contrary to the Nature of Infinite. For what is leſs or greater, has certain bounds or limits, and therefore cannot be infinite, or with-

out any end or bounds. Matter therefore cannot be diviſible *in Infinitum*, ſince all Diviſion is into Parts, and all Parts are capable of being numbred, that is, they are more or fewer, even or odd. And it will not ſuffice to ſay, that Matter can never actually be divided into infinite Parts, tho' it be capable of infinite Diviſion, ſo as that there can be no end of its diviſibility. For the Parts into which it is diviſible, muſt be actually exiſtent, tho' not actually divided: for nothing can be diviſible into Parts which it hath not, and all Parts actually exiſtent, whether they be divided, or only diviſible, are capable of being numbred, or muſt have a determinate Number, and therefore cannot be Infinite. But to ſay that theſe Parts of Matter are indefinite, but not infinite, is only to confeſs, that we know not what to ſay of them: for they are indefinite in reſpect to us, not in their own Nature; we cannot determine their Number, or what End there can be of dividing them; but this is an Argument of our own Ignorance, and proves nothing as to the nature of the thing.

Again, nothing is clearer to every Underſtanding, than that all the Parts into which the whole is divided, being taken together, are equal to the Whole: yet it ſeems many ways demonſtrable, that any ſingle Part is equal to the Whole. I ſhall give but one ſuch Proof of this, as may be moſt obvious. It muſt be granted, that in any Circle a Line may be drawn from every Point of the Circumference to the Center. Suppoſe then the Circle to be the Æquator, or a Line drawn round the Globe of the Earth, and that Ten thouſand leſſer Circles are drawn within the Æquator round the ſame Center, and that a right Line is drawn from every Point of the Æquator to the Center of the Globe; every ſuch Right Line drawn from the Æquator to the Center, muſt of neceſſity cut thro' the Ten thouſand leſſer Circles drawn about the ſame Center, and conſequently there muſt be the ſame number of Points

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in a Circle ten thousand times less than the Æquator, that there is in the Æquator it self. And because there may be a Circle drawn from any point of the Diameter, the lesser Circles may be multiply'd to as many as there are points in the Diameter, which are innumerable; and therefore the least Circle imaginable may by this Demonstration have as many points as the greatest, that is, it may be as big as the greatest, or as big as one never so many thousand times bigger than it self. For all the Lines drawn from the utmost Circumference, terminate in the Center, which proves that the Center, or the least Circle imaginable Immediately next to it, must be equal to the Circumference never so much bigger than it. For to answer, that the lesser Circles have as many points, but not so big as the greatest, is against the Supposition, because I suppose a Line drawn from every one of the least points of the greatest Circle, through the least Circle to the Center, and the least points in the greatest Circle must be as small as any in the least Circle, there being nothing in the nature of Circles or Points to hinder it, and every Line passing from the Circumference to the Center, is supposed to be of the same bigness in all its parts, and therefore all the Points of Intersection must be equal with those in the Circumference.

This proves, that we may lose our selves in the Speculation of Material things: for when we once abstract them from Sense, and consider them in the Theory, they become inexplicable: Because our Faculties were never design'd for such Speculations, and are not made for them, nor are capable of them, at least in this mortal state. But this is no Argument, that our Senses rightly dispos'd, and in due Circumstances, may deceive us in things, which are the Objects of Sense, or that we may be deceiv'd in trusting to them. Because what is the Object of Sense, is the proper Object for us to judge of by Notions deriv'd

from our Senſes, or by the Informations which we receive from them. Our Faculties were deſign'd not for mere Speculation and Curioſity about matters, which perhaps it is impoſſible for us Creatures fully to comprehend, but for our Uſe and Welfare: they were deſign'd to prevent our being deceiv'd in things which are the Objects of Senſe; and therefore all the Abſurdities, which are charged upon the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, are truly urged, becauſe they are concerning an Object of Senſe; and all ſuch Maxims, as *the Part is leſs than the Whole*, &c. muſt hold true, when they are apply'd to Objects of Senſe, tho' it be paſt our Underſtandings to conceive, how they ſhould be applicable to things, which do not fall under the Perception of our Senſes; for theſe Notions were implanted in us, to guide and direct us in the Courſe of this Life; and we muſt rely upon them, when they are apply'd only to their proper Objects, rather than upon any Speculations, which are too nice and high for our Conceptions. And it is as abſurd to believe what contradicts our Senſes in an Object of Senſe, as to extend theſe Maxims to Objects which are inſenſible, and only in Idea.

The ſeeming Demonſtration of theſe, and ſuch like Contradictions, ariſes from the applying of the Maxims taken from Phyſical and Material things, to Mathematical Ideas, which are in the Mind only, and have no Exiſtence in the Nature of things. And the ſame Abſurdities, may be ſtarted upon any other Subject, by confounding the ſeveral Notions and Properties of things of different Natures. That the Whole is greater than Part of it, is a Phyſical Axiom, and obvious to Senſe; but that Lines are form'd by indiviſible Points, is purely Mathematical Speculation, and the Work of Reaſon. So again, that Matter is diviſible, is an Object of Senſe; but, that Diviſibility is inſeparable from Matter, is mere Speculation, and a Deduction which is made from Senſe; of which our Senſes

Senſes can give us no Aſſurance, but that our Reaſon may be miſtaken in it. And whenever we paſs the proper Bounds of each Faculty, and judge of the Difficulties concerning the Objects belonging to one Faculty, by abſtracted Notions belonging to another, we muſt neceſſarily fall into Error and Confuſion. And therefore this muſt needs happen, when we reaſon about Objects, which we know only by Revelation, and which are the Natural and Proper Objects of none of our Faculties.

There are proper Notions and Maxims, which belong to the ſeveral Natures and Kinds of things, and theſe muſt of neceſſity fail us, when they are uſed about things of another Nature. Thus if a Man ſhould judge of Sounds by his Idea's of Colours, or of Colours by his Notions of Sounds, he might multiply Contradictions without end: and yet theſe are not more different, than ſenſible Objects are from inſenſible, and material from immaterial. God may ſee it fitting to reveal ſuch things to us, as are above our Underſtandings, but then we muſt be contented to take his Word for the Truth of them, and not apply our Principles and Maxims taken from things of an inferiour Nature, to things of which we can have no Conception but from Revelation: which would be as abſurd, as for a deaf Man to apply the Notion which he has of Colours to Sounds; or for a blind Man to fancy, that there is no ſuch thing as Colours, becauſe he is told they cannot be heard.

And there muſt be a due proportion between the Faculty and its Object. For the Faculties both of our Bodies and Minds are confined and limited in their Exerciſe about their ſeveral Objects. The Parts of Matter may be too ſmall and fine to be any longer diſcern'd or perceiv'd by Senſe. For only Bodies which are ſo big as to reflect a due Quantity of Rays to the Eye, can be perceiv'd by the Sight it ſelf, the quickeſt and ſubtileſt of all our Senſes. And as Objects in

their Bulk are ſenſible, but are inſenſible in their minute Parts; ſo it is in the inward Senſations or Perceptions of the Mind in reſpect of its Objects. We may puzzle and perplex our ſelves in the Deductions, which may be made from the moſt common Notions. Nothing is more certain and familiar to our Minds, than our own Thoughts. That we Think, and Underſtand, and Will, we all know; but what is the Principle and Subject of Thought in us, and how our Underſtanding and Will act upon, and determine each other, is matter of perpetual Diſpute.

The Sum of this Argument is, that our Faculties are finite, and of no very large Extent in their Operations, but are confined to certain Objects, and limited to certain Bounds and Periods. Both our Natural and Acquired Knowledge is converſant about certain kinds of Objects, and our Faculties are fitted and ſuited to them; and from the Properties and Affections which we obſerve in them, we form Notions, and make Concluſions, and raiſe Maxims and Axioms. Now if we apply our Natural Notions to things which we know only by Revelation, we muſt be very liable to great Miſtakes about them. For thus it is in things not ſo much out of the Reach of our Capacities, and which are not of a ſpiritual Nature; if we frame ſpeculative and abſtract Idea's from the Principles and Maxims which are form'd in our Minds from ſenſible Objects, we may ſoon puzzle our ſelves, and ſeem to demonſtrate Contradictions; which demonſtrates only, that all Arguments of this nature are vain and unconcluding. And therefore it muſt be abſurd to reject the Myſteries of Religion, becauſe they will not come under the Rules of Logick and Philoſophy, when they are acknowledg'd to be incomprehenſible, and therefore not to be judg'd of as to the *Manner* and *Nature* of them by the Rules and Principles of Humane Sciences.

What

What has been here alledg'd concerning the Contradictions about the Divisibility of Matter is no more than has been generally confess'd by the best Philosophers and Mathematicians. And the excellent Mr *Boyle*, having produced the Testimony of *Galileo* and *Des Cartes* upon this Subject, concludes with this Observation. [a] *If then such bold and piercing Wits, and such excellent Mathematicians, are forced to confess, that not only their own Reason, but that of Mankind, may be pass'd and non-plus'd about Quantity, which is an Object of Contemplation, Natural, nay Mathematical, and which is the Subject of the rigid Demonstrations of pure Mathematicks; why should we think it unfit to be believ'd, and to be acknowledg'd, that in the Attributes of God, who is essentially an infinite Being, and an* Ens singularissimum, *and in divers other Divine things, of which we can have no knowledge without Revelation, there should be some things, that our finite Understandings cannot, especially in this Life, clearly comprehend?*

II. Every Man believes and has the Experience of several things, which in the Theory and Speculative Notion of them, would seem as incredible, as any thing in the Scriptures can be suppos'd to be. It was well observ'd by [b] *Quintilian*, and may be observ'd by any one that will consider it, that very many things are true, which scarce seem credible, and as many are false, which have all the Appearance of Truth; and yet the Cause of Unbelief in matters of Religion is chiefly this, that we are hardly brought to believe any thing possible to be done, which we never saw done, and judge of things not from any Principle of Reason, but from our own Experience, and make this the Measure of what is possible to be, not considering that many things may be altogether as possible, which

[a] *Considerat. about the Reconcileableness of Reason and Religion,* § 2.

[b] Sunt enim plurima vera quidem, sed parum credibilia; sicut falsa quoque frequenter verisimilia, Quintil. Institut. l. iv. c. 2.

we

we never knew done, and that we ſhould think many things impoſſible, of which we have the daily Experience, if we had never ſeen nor known them to be. For what we have the daily Experience of, we are apt to think very eaſy, and ſcarce ſuſpect that there can be any Difficulty in it, but frame to our ſelves ſome kind of account of it, and pleaſe our ſelves perhaps with a Conceit that we perfectly underſtand it, and conclude, that ſuch and ſuch things muſt needs come to paſs, from the Cauſes which we aſſign. For when a thing is common and familiar to us, we either take no Pains at all to conſider the Nature of it, or when we do obſerve and conſider it, being aſhamed to confeſs our own Ignorance, we perſuade our ſelves, that there is no ſuch great Difficulty in it, but fancy we underſtand the true Reaſon and Cauſe of it. [c] And if it were not for the careleſneſs of ſome in not minding the wonderful Effects of Nature, and the Pride of others in fancying that they are ignorant of nothing, which is the conſtant Object of their Senſes, I am perſuaded that there are ſeveral things in the World, which we daily ſee and experience, that would ſeem as wonderful almoſt as the Reſurrection it ſelf, or any Myſtery in Religion. The greateſt Philoſophers have been able to give but a very imperfect account of the moſt ordinary and obvious things in Nature, and if we had only a Relation of them without any Trial or Experience, we ſhould be inclin'd to conclude them impoſſible. The King of *Siam*, it is ſaid, would not believe the *Dutch* Ambaſſador, but thought himſelf affronted, when he was told by him, that in *Holland*, Water would become ſo hard in cold Weather, that Men or Elephants might walk upon it, and the Relations of things in thoſe Countries, would have ſeem'd

[c] Quis enim Æthiopas antequam cerneret, credidit? Aut quid non miraculo eſt, cum primùm in notitiam venit? Quàm multa fieri non poſſe, priuſquam ſunt facta, judicantur? Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. vii. c. 1.

as

as ſtrange to us, if the conſtant Report of Men, who have been there, had not made them familiar to us. It was formerly disbeliev'd, nay abſolutely deny'd, as abſurd and impoſſible, that there could be any ſuch place, as that which is now known by the Name of *America*, or that the Torrid and Frigid Zones could be habitable: No Myſtery in Religion can ſeem more incredible to any Man, than theſe things did appear even to Wiſe and Learned Men, and if they had not been found to be true by Navigation, they might have ſeem'd incredible ſtill, for ought we can tell, though now we wonder at the Ignorance of former times, that they ſhould make any doubt of them, and admire how they came to lie ſo long unknown; for theſe things ſeem obvious, when they are once diſcover'd, and it would be a Diſparagement to us, if we could not make as great Diſcoveries at home, as thoſe do, who travel to the *Indies*. And if we will but conſider a little with our ſelves, we ſhall find that we may be at leaſt as much miſtaken in our Philoſophy about the things of another World, as our Anceſtors were, for ſo many Ages, concerning ſo much of this, and ſhall conceive it very poſſible, that there may be a Heaven and a Hell, though we never ſpoke with any body, that had been in either of thoſe places; and that there may be a Trinity and a Reſurrection, tho' we were able to give no account of them. For Nature it ſelf exceeds our Comprehenſion, and therefore the Divine Eſſence, and the Almighty Power of God muſt needs much more exceed it.

The Motion of the Heavens, and of the Winds and Seas, the Light of the Sun and Moon and Stars, the Conception and Birth of all Creatures, nay the Growth of Corn, and of the very Graſs of the Field, and all the moſt obvious and inconſiderable Productions of Nature, have ſo many wonderful Difficulties in the Explication of them, that if we were not mightily inclin'd to flatter our ſelves, I am afraid we ſhould

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ſooner turn Scepticks, than be able to imagine, that we can give any tolerable account of them. For when all is done, we know juſt enough of them to acknowledge and admire the infinite Power and Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, and to be led to a ſtedfaſt Belief and Aſſurance of what he has reveal'd of himſelf, and of the World to come; that *the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world, may be clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 20. How little is it, that we know of this Earth, where we live, and which we dote ſo much upon? For by the leaſt Calculation, it is above three thouſand and five hundred Miles to the Center; but the Art and Curioſity of Man has never reach'd, according to Mr. *Boyle*'s account, after all his Enquiries among Navigators and Miners, [d] *above one mile or two at moſt downward (and that not in above three or four places) either into the Earth, or into the Sea: yet all Aſtronomers agree*, as he afterwards obſerves, *that the Earth is but a Phyſical Point, in compariſon of the Starry Heaven. Of how little Extent then*, ſays he, *muſt our Knowledge be, which leaves us ignorant of ſo many things touching the vaſt Bodies, that are above us, and penetrates ſo little a way even into the Earth, that is beneath us, that it ſeems confined to but a ſmall ſhare of the ſuperficial part of a Phyſical Point.* And to ſhame the Pride and Vanity of Mankind, the chiefeſt Diſcoveries in Philoſophy, as he likewiſe obſerves, have been the Productions of Time and Chance, not of any Wiſdom or Sagacity. Which is a remarkable Acknowledgment in a Perſon, who has oblig'd the World with ſo many wonderful Improvements in experimental Philoſophy.

The Circulation of the Blood has been but lately found out, and was look'd upon as abſurd at its firſt Diſcovery; though now, what Man can doubt of it?

[d] *Excellency of Theology*, §. 4.

And

And ſome of the moſt common effects of Nature might ſeem as ſtrange as any, if the frequency of them did not prevent our wonder. If (as [e] *Maimonides* puts a caſe) we ſuppoſe a Man of never ſo good natural Parts, ſo brought up as to be ignorant of the manner how the ſeveral Species of Animals are preſerved and propagated in the World, how many Scruples might he raiſe to himſelf concerning their Conception and Formation? Might he not object, that it is impoſſible, that the Infant ſhould ever live, and be nouriſhed, and grow in the Womb? And would he not offer abundance of Demonſtrations to prove, that the Natural Birth of Mankind, and of all other Creatures, is utterly impoſſible? Our Saviour in his diſcourſe with *Nicodemus*, anſwers his Doubts concerning the New Birth, by putting him in mind, that he was as little able to give an account of the Wind, and that he could not tell *whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*; implying, that there is much leſs reaſon to doubt of things of a Spiritual Nature, becauſe we are able to give no ſufficient explication of them, when we are thus at a loſs about the moſt common and obvious things in the World, *John* iii. 8. And St. *Paul* confutes all Objections againſt the Reſurrection by a like Argument, alledging, that as it would be intolerably abſurd to deny or doubt of the growth of Corn, becauſe it cannot perfectly be explained: ſo it is much more abſurd, to deny or doubt of the Reſurrection for no better reaſon, ſince ſupernatural things muſt be more obſcure and harder to be underſtood by us than natural, 1 *Cor.* xv. 36.

Indeed, Infidelity could never be more inexcuſable than in the preſent Age, when ſo many Diſcoveries have been made in Natural Philoſophy, which would have been thought as incredible to former Ages, as any thing perhaps that can be imagined, which is not

[e] Maimon. More Nevoch. Part 2. c. 18.

a downright Contradiction. That Gravitating or Attractive Force, by which all Bodies act one upon another, at never ſo great a diſtance, even through a *Vacuum* of prodigious Extent, lately demonſtrated by Mr. *Newton*; the Earth, together with the Planets, and the Sun and Stars being placed at ſuch diſtances, and diſpos'd of in ſuch order, and in ſuch a manner, as to maintain a perpetual balance and poiſe throughout the Univerſe, is ſuch a Diſcovery, as nothing leſs than a Demonſtration could have gained it any Belief. And this Syſtem of Nature being ſo lately diſcovered, and ſo wonderful, that no account can be given of it by any Hypotheſis in Philoſophy, but it muſt be reſolved into the ſole Power and good Pleaſure of Almighty God, may be a caution againſt all Attempts of eſtimating the Divine Works and Diſpenſations by the Meaſures of Humane Reaſon. The vaſtneſs of the World's Extent is found to be ſo prodigious, that it would exceed the Belief not only of the Vulgar, but of the greateſt Philoſophers, if undoubted Experiments did not aſſure us of the Truth of it. We are aſſured by Men of the beſt art and skill in thoſe things, [f] that every Fixt Star of the firſt magnitude, is above an hundred times bigger than the whole Globe of the Earth, and yet they appear leſs thro' the Teleſcopes, than they do to the naked Eye, and look no bigger than meer *Specks* or *Phyſical Points of Light*; and the Sun, which is ſome millions of Miles nearer to us than the Fixt Stars, is by Mathematicians generally believed to be above an hundred and threeſcore times bigger than the Earth; and by the exacteſt Calculations, is eſtimated to be eight or ten thouſand times as big as the whole Earth, and (as Mr. *Boyle* thinks) may perhaps be found to be yet much vaſter by farther Obſervations. The Earth is [g] computed

[f] *See Mr.* Boyle, *of the high Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God.*
[g] Huygen's *Conjecture concerning the Planetary Worlds*, lib. 2.

to

to be above Seventeen millions of *German* miles diſtant from the Sun: And a Bullet carried with the ſame ſwiftneſs that it has when it is ſhot out of a great Gun, ſuppoſing it moved from the Earth to the Sun, would ſpend twenty five Years in its paſſage; to move from *Jupiter* to the Sun, it would require One hundred and twenty five Years; and from *Saturn* thither, Two hundred and fifty Years: and ſuch a Bullet, by Mr. *Huygens*'s computation, would ſpend almoſt Seven hundred thouſand Years in its paſſage between us and the neareſt of the Fixt Stars; he ſpeaks concerning the neareſt of them, and then ſtands amaz'd to think, *what a prodigious number beſides there muſt be of thoſe, which are placed ſo deep in the vaſt Spaces of Heaven, as to be as remote from theſe, as theſe are from the Sun. For, if with our bare Eye we can obſerve above a thouſand, and with a Teleſcope can diſcover ten or twenty times as many, what bounds of number,* ſays he, *muſt we ſet to thoſe, which are out of the reach even of theſe Aſſiſtances! eſpecially, if we conſider the infinite Power of God. Really, when I have been reflecting thus with my ſelf, methought all our Arithmetick was nothing, and we are verſed but in the very Rudiments of Numbers in compariſon of this great Sum. For this requires an immenſe Treaſury, not of twenty or thirty Figures only in our Decuple Progreſſion, but of as many as there are grains of Sand upon the Shore. And yet who can ſay, that even this number exceeds that of the Fixt Stars?*

The Quantity of Motion in the World, is no leſs wonderful. For if the Earth move upon its own [h] Axis, a place ſituate under the Æquator muſt be carried with as ſwift a motion, as a Bullet ſhot out of a Cannon; and if the Earth ſtand ſtill, and the Stars move round about it, a Fixt Star in the Æquator muſt move Fifty two thouſand five hundred fifty five Miles in a minute of an hour; which, if not more, is at

[h] *Mr.* Boyle, ibid.

leaſt

leaſt Three thouſand times faſter than the motion of a Cannon Bullet: and the motion of the Fluid Matter interſpers'd between the Earth and the Stars, muſt be anſwerably rapid. And yet all theſe prodigious Motions are ſo exactly proportioned and moderated, that, as that great Philoſopher Mr. *Boyle* obſerves, no Watch, for a few hours, has ever gone ſo regularly, as the whole World has been moved for ſo many Ages. And in the conſideration of innumerable Inſtances of the ſtupendous Works of Nature, the Ingenuous, ſays he, confeſs their Ignorance, and the Confident betray theirs. A late Writer having obſerved from M. *Huygens*, that a Cannon Bullet would be Twenty five Years in paſſing from the Earth to the Sun, and conſequently Fifty Years in moving thro' the Diameter of the Sun's Orb; concludes, according to the Proportion of the Diameter to the Circumference, that a Cannon Bullet would be about One hundred and fifty Years in performing the Circuit of the Earth's annual Motion; or that the Earth moves about One hundred and fifty times faſter than a Cannon Bullet: Which would be rightly concluded, if the Earth moved in a perfect Circle. But then he adds, that this Orb being leſs than a Point, in compariſon of the whole World's extent; if one could leave this Earth, and go on from any ſide of it in a Right Line to all Eternity, he might perhaps never come to the laſt of thoſe Suns, which we call Fixt Stars. This is in effect to ſay, that there may be an infinite Number of Fixt Stars, or a Space containing an infinite Number of Miles: or that there may be ſuch a Number of Fixt Stars, or of Miles, as is capable neither of Addition, nor of Subſtraction. So manifeſt a Contradiction there is, in ſuppoſing any thing Infinite but God himſelf.

But if any Man ſhall think theſe Calculations extravagant, (as Diſcoveries in Philoſophy are commonly thought, by ſuch as are little converſant in it,) let him

him remember, that the higheſt Calculations, which ſeem moſt extravagant, are ſet down according to the beſt Obſervations, that the Wit of Man, after the experience of ſo many Ages, has been able to make. So that whether theſe Accounts be true or falſe, they ſhew the inſufficiency of humane Underſtanding to examine the Works of God, and do, by conſequence, ſhew how much more uncapable the wiſeſt of Men are to comprehend the Infinite Eſſence of the Creator himſelf.

The famous [i] Mr. *Huygens* lately mentioned, ſpeaking of the Paſſage and Communication of Light every way, and in every Point of Space through ſuch vaſt Regions (which muſt be much more to be admired, if there be ſuppos'd to be a *Vacuum*, in which there can be nothing to direct or determine its Motion and regulate its Courſe) has theſe words; *All theſe things are ſo wiſely, ſo wonderfully contrived, that it is above the power of humane Wit, not to invent or frame ſomewhat like them, but even to imagine or comprehend them.*

To ſay nothing of the ſtrange Diſcoveries concerning the Formation and Contexture of the Bodies both of Plants and Animals; the innumerable little Animals, which are diſcovered by Microſcopes in but one drop of Water, and many other Obſervations of the like nature, are ſo wonderful, that we might well ſuſpect the truth of the Experiments, if Men of the greateſt skill and integrity, as well in our own, as in other Countries, did not agree in them. The vaſt quantities of Water, which are continually flowing out of ſo many thouſand Rivers into the Sea, keep their conſtant courſe, and are ſome way ſo diſpoſed of, as that the Sea and Land retain always a due proportion to each other. But the Original of the Fountains from whence thoſe Rivers proceed, and how this Circulation of Waters is made, is ſtill matter of diſpute. The concuſſions of Earthquakes reaching ſometimes to ſo

[i] *Conjecture concerning the Planetary Worlds*, lib. 1.

vaſt an extent, and the prodigious eruptions of Fire from divers burning Mountains in ſeveral parts of the Earth, throwing out abundance of Matter in Rivers of Fire, of great breadth, for many miles together, ſeem incredible to thoſe, who have not read and conſidered theſe things. The Attraction and Verticity of the Loadſtone, the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, Life and Motion, every thing in Natural Philoſophy, when ſeriouſly examined, has ſo many inexplicable Difficulties, as would make a conſiderate Man very modeſt in his Cenſures concerning things ſupernatural. For if we had been placed in another World, a Natural Hiſtory of this might have ſeemed as ſtrange to us, as any thing Revealed can do now. And it muſt be great preſumption in us, who know ſo little of the World we live in, to talk pragmatically of another, which we have only been told of; and to believe no more than our Senſes can inform us of, when every Senſe may inform us, how narrow and imperfect our Knowledge is, and that we take upon Truſt, or ſwallow in the Groſs, what we are commonly leaſt diſtruſtful about.

And not only Nature, but even Art, exceeds the Apprehenſions of moſt Men. The *Mechanical Powers* and *Motions* are wont to be miſtaken for *Magick*, by ſuch as have not skill and experience in thoſe matters; the performances of *Archimedes* were ſo wonderful beyond all expectation or belief, that the King of *Syracuſe* is ſaid to have made a Decree, to forbid any Man to queſtion whatever *Archimedes* ſhould aſſert. The Force of Gun-powder might be thought incredible, if it were not ſo common amongſt us. Not to mention, that the *Indians* took Watches for Animals, and could not imagine, how Men could hold correſpondence at a diſtance by a little piece of Paper. What Man is there among the Vulgar, that can conceive, how the dimenſions and diſtances of the Sun and Stars can be taken, and how the Eclipſes of the

Sun and Moon, and how the *Satellites* of *Jupiter*, can be calculated? And is not the Knowledge of the wiſeſt Man upon Earth infinitely more ſurpaſs'd by the Divine Wiſdom, than his Knowledge can excel that of the greateſt Idiot?

III. Thoſe who disbelieve and reject the Myſteries of Religion, muſt believe things much more incredible. I. He that will not believe the Being of an Eternal God, muſt believe Matter to be eternal: for it is certain, ſomething muſt be eternal, becauſe nothing could produce nothing; and unleſs there always had been ſomething, there never could have been any thing. But this Eternal Matter muſt either have been once without Motion, or always with it: if it were once without Motion, then Matter muſt move it ſelf, that is, Motion muſt be produced without any thing to produce it. If it were always in motion, then there muſt have been an eternal Succeſſion, ſince Motion cannot be all at once; for the very nature of Motion ſuppoſes Progreſſion, and no Body can move in this Space and the next, at the ſame inſtant: for then it muſt be in two places at once. But all Succeſſion of Duration is gradual, and the Degrees of it are capable of being numbred; and to ſuppoſe an Eternal Succeſſion, is to ſuppoſe an Infinite Number; that is, a Number, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be ſubſtracted; or a Number which is no Number. Motion therefore could not be Eternal, and conſequently the World could not exiſt from Eternity.

But ſince there muſt be ſomething Eternal, there muſt be ſomething, the duration whereof is indiviſible, or which has all its exiſtence together, ſo as to have exiſted now no longer than it had done before the Beginning of the World. For this is the notion of Eternity, that it has neither Beginning nor End: and therefore, things eternal never had a leſs or ſhorter duration, than they now have; and can never

have a longer, after millions of Ages, than they had the firſt Year, or Day, from whence we may be ſuppoſed to begin the computation of thoſe Ages. For a longer or ſhorter Duration muſt ſuppoſe a Beginning, from whence the computation is made; and therefore that which is eternal, and had no Beginning, can have neither a longer nor a ſhorter Duration, but always the ſame: and by conſequence, Time can bear no proportion to Eternity, becauſe that which had a Beginning can bear no proportion to that which had none. Yet Eternity muſt coexiſt with Time, in all the Differences and Succeſſions of it, and muſt be preſent with every part of it; that is, the Eternal Being exiſts the ſpace, ſuppoſe, of a thouſand Years, and a Temporal or Created Being exiſts at the ſame time as long, and the Temporal Being becomes a thouſand Years older than it was, but the Eternal no older than it was before; becauſe, tho' it coexiſt with Time, yet it has no reſpect to the diviſion of it into Paſt, Preſent and Future. There is no Myſtery in Religion more difficult and perplexing than this; and yet this is no more than what every one, tho' he be a Deiſt, or an Atheiſt, muſt acknowledge to believe, if he will but conſider it.

2. Whoever believes that there is a God, and yet believes no Revelation, or that the Scriptures are not by Revelation from him, muſt believe a God, and yet deny the Divine Attributes; he muſt believe that there is a [k] God, who is not eſſentially juſt, and good, and holy, which is, in effect, to believe no God at all, as I have proved at large in the former Book.

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[k] Ἐδεῖ γὰρ ἔδει θεὸν ὄντα καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐπαμύναι τοῖς δικαίως λόγοις, καὶ ἀπερεῖσον μὴ ὑποφθῦναι τῷ διαβόλῳ τὸ φθόνον, &c. Τί δὴ ἄρα λοιπὸν ἔδει δρᾶν τὸ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργόν; φθεγξῆσαι κεφαλῇν τὸ ὀπὶ τῆς γῆς τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις δαίμοσι, &c. εἶτα πῶς ἦν ἀγαθὸς, εἰ μεῖον ἀμοιρήσει καὶ λίαν τοῦ ταῦτα δρᾶν, ἀδενὸς ἡμᾶς ἀξίωσε λόγου. Cyrill. Alex. contr. Julian. lib. 8.

Much

Much more might be ſaid upon ſo copious a Subject, but this is enough to make us more humble and modeſt, in judging of the Divine Myſteries. For ſhall poor Mortals, who know ſo little, and that little ſo imperfectly, preſume to cenſure the Holy Scriptures, becauſe they contain things, which they cannot underſtand? Shall he, that cannot fully explain the Nature of the vileſt Inſect, reject what God hath deliver'd concerning himſelf, becauſe he doth not comprehend it? *The thoughts of mortal men are miſerable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body preſſeth down the ſoul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that muſeth upon many things. And hardly do we gueſs aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven, who hath ſearched out?* Wiſd. ix. 14, 15, 16.

" But [1] out of the Contemplation of Nature, and " out of the Principles of humane Reaſon, to diſ- " courſe, or earneſtly to urge a point touching the " Myſteries of Faith; and again to be curiouſly ſpe- " culative into thoſe Secrets, to ventilate them, and " to be inquiſitive into the manner of the Myſtery, " is in my Judgment not ſafe: *Da fidei, quæ fidei " ſunt.* For the Heathens themſelves conclude as " much, in the excellent and divine Fable of the Gol- " den Chain, that Men and Gods were not able to " draw *Jupiter* down to the Earth; but contrariwiſe, " *Jupiter* was able to draw them up to Heaven. " Wherefore he laboureth in vain, who ſhall attempt " to draw down Heavenly Myſteries to our Reaſon; " it rather becomes us to raiſe and advance our Rea- " ſon to the adored Throne of Divine Truth.

[1] *Lord* Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, B. 3. c. 2.

CHAP. II.

Of Inſpiration.

ALL the Motion of Material things is deriv'd from God, and the beſt account which thoſe who have the moſt ſtudy'd the Nature of Motion, have been able to give of it is only this, that it is an Effect of the Divine Power manifeſting it ſelf according to certain Laws or Rules, which God has been pleas'd to preſcribe for the Communication of Motion from one Body to another. And it is at leaſt as conceivable by us, that God doth act upon the Immaterial, as that he acts upon the Material part of the World, and highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he concerns himſelf with our Souls much more than with our Bodies. There is no doubt to be made, but that ſeparate and unbody'd Spirits have ways of converſing, or communicating their Thoughts to one another: Indeed, all the Communication and Diſcourſe, that is among Men in this World, is properly between their Souls, which uſe their Bodies as Inſtruments for the Conveyance of their Thoughts and Notions from one to another; and as their Bodies are more or leſs fit and ſerviceable to this end, ſo their Diſcourſe is more or leſs eaſily convey'd; and therefore Souls, when they are at liberty from theſe Bodies, muſt have a Power to communicate their own Thoughts, in a way much more free and unconfin'd, than in this Life; as they have more Knowledge in a ſeparate State, ſo they muſt have fitter means to communicate it. And ſince the Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in the Viſion of God, that is, in the Communications of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, God certainly can as well act upon the Minds of Men in this mortal State, though we be leſs capable of receiving

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or obſerving the Influences of his Spirit. Since finite Spirits can act one upon another, it is reaſonable to believe that the Spirit of God, *the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh* doth move and work upon the Spirits of Men, that he enlightens their Underſtandings, and inclines their Wills by a ſecret Power and Influence in the methods of his ordinary Grace. That, when he reveals no New Objects of Faith to them, he diſpoſes and enables them to believe thoſe already reveal'd, and to live ſuitably to ſuch a Belief. And he can likewiſe act upon the Wills and the Underſtandings of ſome Men with a clearer and more powerful Light and Force, than he is pleas'd to do upon others, in ſuch a manner as to render them infallible in receiving and delivering his Pleaſure and Commandments to the World. He can ſo reveal himſelf to them, by the Operations of his Holy Spirit, as that they ſhall be infallibly aſſur'd of what is reveal'd to them, and as infallibly aſſure others of it. Which kind of Revelation is ſtyl'd Inſpiration, becauſe God doth not only move and actuate the Minds of ſuch Men; but vouchſafes to 'em the extraordinary Communications of his Spirit; the Spirit then more eſpecially may be liken'd to the Wind, to which it is compared in Scripture: for by ſtrong Convictions, and forcible, but gracious Impreſſions, he breaths upon their Souls, and infuſes his Divine Truths into them. But upon thoſe, to whom God did thus reveal himſelf by inward Light and Knowledge, he did moreover beſtow a Power of giving external Evidence by miraculous Works, that their Pretences were real, and that what they ſpoke was not of themſelves, but was reveal'd to them from God. This Inſpiration the Apoſtles profeſs'd to have, both in their Preaching and Writings, and this Evidence they gave of it.

In ſpeaking of the Inſpiration, by which the Scriptures were written, I. I ſhall ſhew wherein the Inſpiration of the Writers of the Scriptures did conſiſt, or

how far it extended. II. I ſhall from thence make ſuch Inferences, as may afford a ſufficient Anſwer to the Objections alledg'd upon this Subject.

I. I ſhall ſhew wherein the Inſpiration of the Writers of the Scriptures did conſiſt, or how far it extended. And here we muſt conſider both the Matter and the Words of Scripture. The *Matter* is either concerning things reveal'd, and which could not be known but by Revelation, or it is ſomething which was the Object of Senſe and Matter of Fact, as when the Apoſtles teſtify, that our Saviour was crucify'd, and roſe again; or laſtly, it is matter of Reaſon, as Diſcourſes upon Moral Subjects, and Inferences made from things reveal'd, or from matter of Fact. God, who is a Spirit, can ſpeak as intelligibly to the Spirits and Minds of Men, as Men can ſpeak to the Ear, and in things which could not be known but by Revelation, the Notions were ſuggeſted and infuſed into the Minds of the Apoſtles and Prophets by the Holy Ghoſt, but they might be left to put them into their own [a] *Words*, being ſo directed in the uſe of them, as to give infallibly the Senſe and full Importance of the Revelation. In matters of Fact, their Memories were, according to our Saviour's Promiſe, aſſiſted and confirm'd. In matters of Diſcourſe or Reaſoning, either from their own Natural Notions, or from things Reveal'd, or from Matters of Fact, their Underſtandings were enlightned, and their Judgments ſtrengthned. And ſtill in all caſes their natural Faculties were ſo ſupported and guided both in their Notions and Words, as that nothing ſhould come into their Writings, but what is infallibly true. They had always the Uſe of their Faculties, tho' under the infallible Direction and Conduct of the Holy Ghoſt, and in

[a] Præterea ſcito, unumquemque Prophetam peculiare quid habere, & ea lingua, eaque loquendi ratione, quæ ipſi eſt familiaris & conſueta, ipſum impelli à Prophetia ſua ad loquendum ei, qui intelligit ipſum, Maimon. More Nevoch. Part. 2. c. 29.

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things that were the proper Objects of their Faculties, the Holy Ghoſt might only ſupport and guide them, as in matters of Senſe and natural Reaſon and Memory, and in their Words and Style to expreſs all theſe. But in things of an higher Nature, which were above their Faculties, and which they could have no Knowledge of, but from Revelation, the things themſelves were infuſed, though the Words in moſt caſes might be their own, but they were preſerv'd from Error in the uſe of them by that Spirit, who was to *guide them into all truth.*

For though the ſeveral Writers of the Scriptures might be allow'd to uſe their own Words and Style, yet it was under the infallible Guidance and Influence of the Spirit, as when a Man is left to the uſe of his own *Hand*, or manner of Writing, but is directed in the Senſe and Orthography by one who dictates to him, or aſſiſts him with his help, where it is needful. *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, 2 Pet. i. 21. *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *The Holy Ghoſt ſaith*, by the Pſalmiſt, *to day if ye will hear his voice*, Heb. iii. 7. *David* ſaith of himſelf, *the Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his word was in my tongue*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. And God is ſaid to *ſpeak by the hand of Moſes his ſervant, and by the hand of his ſervant Ahijah the Prophet*, 1 Kings viii. 53. xiv. 18. By which it appears, that he uſed the Prophets as his Inſtruments in revealing his Will: For as Miracles were by the immediate Power of God, though wrought by the Hands of Men, ſo the Revelations were of God, though ſpoken or written by the Prophets and Apoſtles. But though God uſed them as his Inſtruments, yet not as mechanical, but as rational Inſtruments; and as in working their Miracles, they were not always neceſſarily determin'd to the Place, or to the Perſons on whom they were wrought, but in general were guided to work them,

them, when they were proper and ſeaſonable; and the Actions, by which they wrought them, were their own, though the Power that accompany'd them, was of God; ſo in their Doctrines, they might be permitted to uſe their own Words and Phraſes, and to be guided by prudential Motives, as to Time, and Place, and Perſons, with a directive Power only over them, to ſpeak and write nothing but infallible Truth, upon ſuch occaſions, and in ſuch Circumſtances, as might anſwer the end of their Miſſion, with which they were entruſted.

God promis'd *Moſes*, when he ſent him to *Pharaoh*, that he *would be with his mouth*, and *with Aaron's mouth*, and would *teach them what they ſhould ſay*, Exod. iv. 12, 15. And our Saviour tells his Diſciples, *ye ſhall be brought before governors and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles: But when they deliver you up, take no thought, how or what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak*, Matt. x. 18, 19. And if *Moſes* was inſpired upon that particular occaſion, and the Apoſtles were inſpired in things which were perſonal, as in the defence that they made for themſelves, they muſt much rather be inſpired in their Writings, which concern the Church in all Ages. St. *Luke had perfect underſtanding of all things from above*, Luke i. 3. ſo Doctor *Lightfoot* renders it with great Probability: for thus ἄνωθεν is uſed for ἐξανώθεν in many places of Scripture, *John* iii. 3, 31. xix. 2. *Jam.* i. 17. iii. 17. And this the Church of *Corinth* expected from St. *Paul*; they ſought a *proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in him*, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. as that Apoſtle tells them he did, and that not in a weak and obſcure, but in a powerful and effectual manner. He writes for the ſame reaſon to the *Theſſalonians*, *ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 2. and he diſtinguiſheth between his own Judgment (aſſiſted and enlightned, though not infallibly, by the Holy Ghoſt) and the

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Commandments of the Lord, or the infallible Dictates of the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* vii. 10, 12, 25, 40. *The Holy Ghoſt taught* the Apoſtles *all things, and brought all things to their remembrance*, John xiv. 26. and *guided them into all Truth*, John xvi. 13. *and the Unction from the holy One* inſtructed 'em to *know all things*, 1 John ii. 20. that is, all things pertaining to Salvation; this is ſaid of their Diſciples, and therefore may in a more eſpecial manner be affirmed of the Apoſtles themſelves; inſomuch that the words themſelves are aſcribed to the Holy Ghoſt, *which things alſo we ſpeak not in the words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. For they were under the conduct and influence of the Holy Ghoſt in the choice of every word they uſed, tho' not ſo, as to be inſpired with a new Style and Dialect; the words themſelves were not always ſuggeſted, but they were always inſpired in the uſe of them; and tho' they might be permitted to chuſe their own Words and Expreſſions, yet it was with this limitation, that they were never permitted to make choice of ſuch, as would not fully and infallibly expreſs the Mind of the Holy Ghoſt.

And therefore, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 13. the Apoſtle gives this direction, *Wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue, pray that he may interpret*; that is, let him pray, that he may have the Divine Inſpiration to aſſiſt him in expreſſing himſelf in a known Tongue, by which he is enabled to ſpeak in an unknown one, and that he may be infallible in rendring that in his own Tongue, which he infallibly ſpeaks in another. Which makes it evident, that when they ſpoke by Inſpiration in their own Language, they had the Guidance and Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt in the uſe of their words; and this was the reaſon why thoſe that ſpoke by Inſpiration in a ſtrange Tongue, durſt not preſume to interpret the words, which the Holy Ghoſt dictated to them in that Tongue, ſo as to give them

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out for Divine Revelation, unleſs they were particularly empowered to render them in their own Language with the ſame exactneſs, with which they were inſpired to ſpeak in a ſtrange Tongue. For that the neceſſity of praying that they might interpret, could not proceed from any inability to interpret, by reaſon of the force and heat of the Rapture which was upon 'em, that made 'em unable to utter their Conceptions in their own Language, or to retain the ſenſe of them in their minds afterwards, ſeems plain from verſe 27. *If any Man ſpeak in an unknown Tongue, let it be by two, or at the moſt by three, and that by courſe, and let one interpret*, &c. For if they had been acted by ſuch rapturous Heats and Extaſies, they could have been as little able to refrain, when the Rapture was upon them, and to remember what they had to deliver, when their courſe came to ſpeak, as they are ſuppoſed to have been to remember what they were inſpired to ſpeak in one Language, when they went to expreſs it in another. Neither were they ignorant themſelves of what they ſpoke. But when it is ſaid, *ver.* 14. *for if I pray in an unknown Tongue, my Spirit prayeth, but my Underſtanding is unfruitful*; the meaning of that is, that it was of no benefit to others, tho' *he that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue, edifieth himſelf*, ver. 4. Some Men were inſpired to ſpeak in ſtrange Tongues with as much readineſs, and more exactneſs than they could do in their native Language; but this was inſignificant to ſuch as underſtood not the Tongue in which they ſpoke. *What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo*, ver. 15. *i. e.* I will pray by the Guidance and Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, but in my own Language, in which my Underſtanding is employed, and the words are not all directly ſuggeſted to me by the Spirit (as they muſt be in a Language which I ſpeak meerly by Inſpiration) but I am only ſo far guided and aſſiſted in the choice and uſe of my words, as to

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ſpeak infallibly the mind of the Spirit; *Elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the Spirit*, &c. *ver.* 16. Thoſe who had the Gift of Tongues were, it ſeems, ſo puff'd up with it, that they would worſhip God in no other but in thoſe Languages, tho' none of the Aſſembly underſtood them, and would be always unneceſſarily and unſeaſonably repeating the Revelations, which they had received in ſtrange Languages: The Apoſtle tells ſuch Men, that it was very improper and abſurd to deliver their Revelations in an unknown Tongue, or to Pray or give Thanks in a Language not underſtood by thoſe that heard them, but that they ſhould pray that they might interpret, or forbear the uſe of the Gift of Tongues, unleſs before them who underſtood the Tongues in which they ſpoke, that it might be for Edification. For in their Inſpirations, they were confined at certain times to ſome particular Language, *as the Spirit gave them utterance*; and it might have done great prejudice to the Truth of Religion, if they of themſelves had ventured to render that into their own Language, which was revealed to them in a ſtrange Tongue: and for this reaſon it was not permitted thoſe, who ſpoke with Tongues, to ſpeak in any but that, in which the Revelation was made to them, unleſs they were enabled to do it by being inſpired with a Power of Interpretation. For *to ſpeak with Tongues*, and *to interpret*, were diſtinct Gifts, 1 *Cor.* xii. 10, 30. and whatever Gift any one had received, he was confined to the exerciſe of it, and might not preſume to pretend to another, which he had not received.

The Gift of *Tongues*, and of the *Interpretation of Tongues*, being ſo particularly diſtinguiſhed, this muſt imply, that the Apoſtles (who are ſuppoſed to have had all the Gifts, which others had but in part) were guided by the Spirit in their Words and Expreſſions, ſince thoſe who ſpoke by the Spirit, were unable to interpret without a particular Gift; for no Interpre-

tation was ſufficient, but ſuch as render'd the Senſe with infallible truth and exactneſs; and if this exactneſs of words was requiſite in their Aſſemblies, it muſt be much rather neceſſary in the Writings of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts. Among other Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, are reckon'd *the Word of Wiſdom*, and *the Word of Knowledge*, 1 Cor. xii. 8. the former *Grotius* underſtands of ſpeaking Wiſe Sayings, and the latter of Knowledge in Hiſtory; and to the reſt was added the Gift of *diſcerning of Spirits*, ver. 10. And as there were ſeveral Gifts, ſo there were ſeveral Offices in the Church, *Epheſ.* iv. 11, 12. Now the ſeveral Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were not all beſtowed ordinarily upon the ſame Perſon, but ſuch as were neceſſary for that Office and Employment which he was to execute. But as the Apoſtolical Power comprehended in it the Powers of every other Office, ſo it was requiſite that they ſhould poſſeſs the Gifts proper for the performance of whatever was to be done by them. And when God, by his providence and diſpoſal of things, gave the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts occaſions of writing upon ſuch and ſuch Subjects, and to ſuch and ſuch Perſons, or Churches, he by his Spirit inwardly excited and aſſiſted them in it, beſtowing upon them the Gifts of *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge*, and of writing and ſpeaking either in their own or any other Language, in which they were required to write or ſpeak: For we are not to ſuppoſe that any Gifts were beſtowed upon others, and yet denied to them, to whom they were moſt uſeful and neceſſary, in order to the delivering of that Faith and Doctrine, which was to be the ſtanding Rule for the attainment of Salvation to all Chriſtians unto the end of the World. When others had the Gift of ſpeaking and interpreting ſtrange Languages, it cannot be conceived that the writers of the Holy Scriptures ſhould be refuſed that neceſſary Aſſiſtance in the Languages in which they wrote, that might preſerve them from Error; and if

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any, without the Gifts proper for it, had undertaken any Office or Miniſtration, the Gift of *diſcerning of Spirits* was a Security to the Church from any hurt that might enſue by the pretences of ſuch Undertakers.

We may be certain, that all the Gifts, which were beſtowed for the Edification of the Church, were (as far as they were needful) vouchſafed more eſpecially to all ſuch, as were to leave behind them, for the benefit of the Church in all Ages, an account of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the terms of the Salvation to be obtained thereby; and that no ſuch Guidance and Direction of the Holy Ghoſt was wanting, as might preſerve them from Error in any particular: for there is no particular, but it will fall under ſome one of thoſe Gifts, which were beſtowed upon the firſt Diſciples. They were not neceſſarily to write in an exact and elegant Stile, but in ſuch as was ſecured from Error in whatever they delivered. To what purpoſe elſe had been ſo many ſeveral Gifts? To keep them from groſs Errors, and fundamental Miſtakes, there could have been no need of ſuch a variety of Gifts: but when every ſort of Error, which Men are prone to, had a Remedy provided to prevent it, we may be aſſured that no Error was ſuffered in thoſe Writings, which were the moſt important Work of the Apoſtolical Function, and deſigned *for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt*, not in one Age and Nation only, but throughout all Ages, and in all Parts of the World.

II. I ſhall now proceed to make ſuch Inferences, as may afford a ſufficient Anſwer to the Objections alledged upon this Subject.

1. The Inſpiration of the Writers of the Scriptures, did not exclude humane Means, ſuch as Information in Matters of Fact, either by their own Senſes, or by the Teſtimony of others; or Reaſoning from their own Notions and Obſervations: but the Holy Ghoſt guided them infallibly in the uſe of all ſuch Means.

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2. The Inſpiration of the Prophets and Apoſtles, or Evangeliſts, did not exclude the uſe of their own Words and Style. All Laws become obligatory, not from any Elegancy of Style, or Fairneſs of the Character, in which they are written or printed, but from the Authority of the Lawgivers, by whom they are enacted. And it is as unreaſonable for any now to cavil at the Style and Language of the Divine Writers, as it would have been in thoſe, who ſaw the Sacred Books in their Hand-writing, to have objected, that they did not write the moſt exact and beautiful Hands. For they might as well uſe their own way of Expreſſion, as their own manner of Writing. And as they might be permitted the uſe of theſe, ſo they might be permitted, or in ſome caſes directed to uſe the Words of others. Many things delivered in one Book of the Scriptures, are likewiſe delivered in another; and ſome things are repeated in the ſame words, that God revealing the ſame things, and in the ſame expreſs words, at different times, and by different perſons, might make the Revelation of them the more evident and remarkable. For that, in which ſeveral inſpired Perſons concur, is the more taken notice of, and becomes the more obſerved, as a thing of great weight and moment. The reaſon why *the Dream was doubled unto* Pharaoh *twice, was becauſe the thing was eſtabliſhed by God, and God would ſhortly bring it to paſs*, Gen. xli. 32. It is in this as it is in all other things, it is expedient, that in Matters of great Concernment, there ſhould be the more Solemnity, and that they ſhould be the oftner repeated, and the more inſiſted upon; and if they be expreſs'd in the ſame words, this implies, that thoſe words carry more than ordinary weight in them: And therefore not only all the Divine Writers agree in the ſame purpoſe and deſign, and teſtifie the ſame things, as to the chief Points of Religion; but ſome Prophets have foretold the ſame things, even in the ſame words with others,

others, as *Iſaiah* ii. 2, 3, 4. *Mic.* iv. 1, 2, 3. and ſeveral Laws and Matters of Fact, are repeated in words which are very near the ſame.

3. Tho' ſome things are ſet down in the Scriptures indefinitely, and without any poſitive aſſertion or determination, this is no proof againſt their being written by Divine Inſpiration. For this doth not prove, that the Pen-men of thoſe Paſſages were uncertain and doubtful in the Particulars ſo expreſs'd, becauſe the things were of that nature, that it was needleſs to ſpeak preciſely of them: As when St. *John* ſays, *John* xxi. 8. *They were not far from Land, but as it were two hundred Cubits*; it cannot from hence be concluded, that the Evangeliſt was ignorant how far they were from Land: For it was not material to his deſign to be more particular in a circumſtance of that nature; but it was ſufficient to ſay, that they were about two hundred Cubits off at Sea; and it is uſual with all Writers to omit Fractions, and inſert only whole Numbers, when it is not material to their purpoſe to inſiſt upon every minute Circumſtance. It is ordinary with the beſt Writers to expreſs things uncertainly, which they were notwithſtanding throughly acquainted withal; and to ſeem ignorant of things, which they perfectly underſtood, but paſs'd over as not worth the taking notice of, or not conſiderable enough for them to own the knowledge of them. It is a known Elegancy to ſay, *neſcio quid*, or *neſcio quem*, when the Author, ſo ſpeaking, was not ignorant of the Thing or Perſon there meant, but either ſignified his contempt of the Perſon, or Thing, or intimated that it was not worth his while to trouble himſelf, or his Hearers, or Readers, with a more particular Relation. The [b] *Romans*, out of that Awe and Reve-

D rence

[b] Credo hæc eadem Indutiomarum in teſtimonio timuiſſe aut cogitaſſe: qui primum illud verbum conſideratiſſimum noſtræ conſuetudinis

rence which they had for Oaths, never ſpoke poſitively in giving evidence of things which they were certain of, and had ſeen themſelves. And uncertain Forms of Speech are obſerved, [c] by *Ulpian*, to have have been uſual with the Ancient *Greek* Authors in their ſpeaking of things, whereof they were very well aſſured. It could be of no uſe or moment in relation to the miraculous draught of Fiſhes, to know whether the Ship were two hundred Cubits, or half a Cubit, or a quarter of a Cubit over or under from the Land; and it is uſual with St. *John* to expreſs himſelf in this manner, *John* ii. 6. vi. 10. xix. 14.

Either then (to keep to the ſame inſtance) St. *John* might know the preciſe diſtance, and for the Reaſons mentioned, not declare it; or, it not being of any uſe or conſequence for us to be more particularly informed in a matter of that nature, the Holy Ghoſt might ſuffer him to be ignorant of it, if he had no other means of knowing it but by Inſpiration: For the Holy Ghoſt aſſiſted the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts to write infallible Truth, but not always to write every little circumſtance concerning the things which they relate. Many Miracles are wholly omitted, and many Circumſtances not conſiderable or material to be mentioned, are omitted, of thoſe Miracles which are recorded. But if nothing be related which may lead us into Error, and nothing omitted which is neceſſary to be known; this is ſufficient, and is all that can be expected in a Book, which is to be a Rule of Faith and Manners to us. It is neceſſary that nothing but Truth ſhould be contained in it, but not that every Truth

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tudinis *Arbitror*, quo nos etiam tunc utimur, cum ea dicimus jurati, quæ comperta habemus, quæ ipſi vidimus, ex toto teſtimonio ſuo ſuſtulit, atque omnia ſe ſcire dixit. Cic. pro M. Fonteio. Vid. Acad. Qu. l. 2. ſub fin.

[c] Τὸ ᾧ Νομίζω, ὥς ἤδη ἐν τοῖς Σωκρατικοῖς, καὶ τὸ Δοκεῖν, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ὑ πάνυ ὡς ἐπὶ ἀμφιβόλε τάττουσιν οἱ παλαιοὶ, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις καὶ ἐπὶ τ ἀληθεύειν. Ulp. in Demoſt. Olynth. 1.

ſhould

ſhould be in it: for then *the World it ſelf could not contain the Books that ſhould be written.* Suppoſe therefore that St. *John* did not know preciſely, how many Cubits the Ship was from Shore; what doth this prove? That he did not know the Miracle which he there relates? Doth it prove, that he was not inſpired in what he doth relate, if he were not inſpired in what he omits? If he had determined the preciſe diſtance, and had not known it, this might have diſcredited the Authority of his Goſpel; but when he has not determined it, can this be an Argument in diminution of its Authority, if he did not know what he did not profeſs to know? Is it not a good Argument in confirmation of its Authority, that he would aſſert nothing but what he certainly knew, if in what he was not perfectly aſſured, he mentions no farther than he knew of it? So St. *Paul* acquaints us, when he ſpoke himſelf, and *not the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* vii. 6, 12, 25, 40. 2 *Cor.* viii. 10. which is an Argument to us, that in all other caſes he did not ſpeak of himſelf, but the Lord ſpoke by him: it is a confirmation of his Integrity, that he would impoſe nothing upon us as of Divine Authority, which is not really ſo, becauſe he that told us in any one caſe, that he ſpoke of himſelf, not as from the Lord, would have made the ſame Declaration in other caſes, whenever he had written any thing without expreſs Revelation.

4. In things, which might fall under humane Prudence and Obſervation, there the Spirit of God ſeems not to have dictated immediately to the Prophets and Apoſtles, but only to have uſed a directive or conducting Power and Influence, ſo as to ſupply ſuch Thoughts and Apprehenſions to them as might be moſt proper and ſeaſonable, and to keep them in the uſe of their own Reaſon, within the bounds of Infallible Truth, and of Expediency for the preſent caſe and occaſion. They might be permitted to inſert ſuch things as the ſtate of Affairs required; which, tho' not

immediately dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, yet were agreeable to the end and deſign of his Inſpiration, and ſerviceable to the Miniſtry, to which they were appointed. There ſeems to be no neceſſity to aſſert, that St. *Paul* ſent for his Cloak and Parchments by Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, or that he had any immediate command or direction to ſalute the particular Perſons named at the end of his Epiſtles; but only that his Doctrine was immediately inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt: and as he might be permitted to put that into his own words, but ſo as never to be ſuffered to expreſs it otherwiſe than in ſuch a manner, as was fully agreeable to the mind and intention of the Holy Spirit, and therefore infallibly true: So in theſe leſſer and indifferent matters, which ſome preſent occaſion made requiſite to be written of, he had the guidance and aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt to prevent him from writing any thing, but what was expedient in thoſe Circumſtances, and ſerviceable to his Calling and Miniſtry in the propagation of the Goſpel.

But things of an indifferent nature in themſelves might become neceſſary as to Time, and Place, and Perſons, and therefore might in ſome caſes be of Divine Inſpiration. St. *Paul*'s journying into *Macedonia* rather than into any other Country, was in it ſelf a thing indifferent; but the Salvation of many Souls might depend upon it; and therefore he was warned by Revelation, not *to preach the Word in Aſia*, nor *to go into Bithynia*, but into *Macedonia*, Acts xvi. 6, 7, 9. In like manner, the Salutations of particular Perſons at the end of his Epiſtles, tho' they may ſeem to us to be of no great importance, yet might be of mighty conſideration and conſequence to thoſe who were concerned in them. To be ſaluted by an Apoſtle in ſo particular and ſolemn a manner, might revive their Spirits, and encourage them to perſeverance under their Temptations and Afflictions: for his Salutations

tions include his Benediction, which was the exerciſe of his Apoſtolick Office and Authority in one great branch of it. And God himſelf might direct the Apoſtle to ſalute ſuch Perſons for their ſupport and comfort, and encouragement in the Faith. Beſides, the Salutation added at the end of the Epiſtles, are a confirmation of the Authority of them: the Perſons there mentioned, were as ſo many Witneſſes, to atteſt that they were genuine. For, beſides the general concernment of the Catholick Church, and of the ſeveral Churches more eſpecially, to which ſuch Epiſtles were written, the Perſons who were ſaluted by name in them, were more particularly concerned to take cognizance of them, and to know all the circumſtances relating to them.

And St. *Paul*'s advice to *Timothy*, to *drink no longer Water, but to uſe a little Wine for his Stomach's ſake, and his often Infirmities*, 1 Tim. v. 23. was requiſite to be given in that Epiſtle, that it might remain recorded in the Scriptures, in confutation of that Superſtition, which ſome were guilty of in abſtaining from things lawful, (and particularly from Wine) out of an opinion of Holineſs in refraining from them, and of Sin in the uſe of them.

5. That infallible Spirit which aſſiſted and inſpired the Apoſtles and other Sacred Writers, was not permanent and habitual, or continually reſiding in them, nor given for all purpoſes and occaſions; as we may obſerve in St. *Paul*, who acquaints us in ſome things that he had not received of the Lord what he writes. But the Gifts of the Spirit were beſtowed for the benefit and edification of the Church; and therefore were given in ſuch meaſures, at ſuch times, and upon ſuch occaſions, as might be uſeful for edification. We find that in a matter of great concernment and importance to the whole Church, the Apoſtles met together in Council, to decide the Controverſie; both, becauſe according to our Saviour's promiſe to them, they

might expect a more abundant Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, when they were aſſembled in his name for that purpoſe; and becauſe the thing in debate depended upon Matter of Fact, *viz.* that the Holy Ghoſt was given to the Gentiles, and therefore it was requiſite that many ſhould meet together, and teſtify of that matter. Beſides, ſeveral that came down from *Judea* to *Antioch* had refuſed to ſubmit to the Authority of St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*, and it was neceſſary that theſe Men ſhould be convinced by the unanimous and joint Authority of the Apoſtles, who being met in a full Council declar'd, *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt and to us*, Acts xv. 28. that is, not only to us, but to the Holy Ghoſt, to the Holy Ghoſt as well as to us. And this was for an Example and Precedent to the Church in future Ages, to determine Controverſies by the Authority of Councils.

6. The Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were beſtow'd upon Men, who might have perſonal Failings, and were *men of like paſſions* with us, Acts xiv. 25. *They had this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of themſelves*, 2 Cor. iv. 7. But they were choſen to be Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and therefore muſt be ſo far exempt from Error in the Execution of their Office and Miniſtry, as not to deliver falſe Doctrines in their Writings, which were to be read and receiv'd of all Churches in all Ages of the World; for this would have defeated and ſubverted the Deſign of the Inſtitution of the Apoſtles, and of the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore this God would not ſuffer, tho' they might be ſuffer'd to incur ſuch Failings as were no Prejudice to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

7. There being nothing aſſerted in the Canon of Scripture, but what has ſome relation to the Edification of the Church, though ſome parts of it have a leſs direct and apparent Tendency to this end than others; if any one Paſſage or Circumſtance ſhould have been

been erroneous, this would diminiſh the Authority of the Scriptures, and make them in ſome degree leſs capable to promote the end for which they were written. And there being ſo many particular Gifts, the Gift *of Wiſdom* and *of Knowledge*; *of Tongues*, and *of Interpretation of Tongues*, and *of diſcerning of ſpirits*: and ſo many diſtinct Offices, as *Apoſtles*, and *Prophets*, and *Evangeliſts*, and *Paſtors*, and *Teachers*, we cannot conceive how thoſe Gifts and theſe Offices could be better employ'd than in preſerving that Book from Error, which was to be the Standard of Truth for all Ages; or how, if that Book had not been ſecur'd from Error by them, theſe Gifts and Offices had anſwer'd the end of their Appointment.

Thus much may ſuffice, to prove the Scriptures to be infallible in all the parts and circumſtances of them. But it may be obſerv'd, that if the Infallibility of the Sacred Writers had not extended to the Words and Circumſtances, but only to the Subſtantial and Fundamental points of Religion, this of it ſelf were enough to vindicate the Divine Authority of the Chriſtian Religion. Nay farther, if the Scriptures were written only with the ſame Certainty and Integrity that is in *Thucydides*, or in any other credible Hiſtorian (which the moſt obſtinate and inveterate Adverſary can never deny) yet even then no Man, without much Unreaſonableneſs, could reject it.

CHAP. III.

Of the Style of the Holy Scriptures.

WHen God reveals himſelf to Men, he muſt be ſuppos'd to do it in ſuch a manner, as is ſuitable to the Neceſſities and Occaſions of thoſe to whom the Revelation is made, and in ſuch Language and

Forms of Speech, as that he may be underſtood by thoſe to whom he reveals himſelf; he may be ſuppos'd to ſpeak in the Idiom, and in the Metaphors and Phraſes in uſe amongſt them, and to allude to their Cuſtoms and Manner of Life, to have Regard to the Condition and State of their Affairs, and to condeſcend in ſome meaſure to their Weakneſſes, to ſpeak to their Capacities, ſo as to be underſtood in his Laws, and to encourage and excite Men to obey them. For though the particular Reaſon and Deſign of every Law be not always neceſſary to be known, yet it is neceſſary that thoſe to whom they are given, ſhould know what the Laws are, and that they ſhould have their Duty preſcribed in ſuch a way, as may be effectual to recommend the Practice of it to them.

The Style of the Holy Scriptures is a Subject which has been largely diſcours'd of by Mr. *Boyle* and others. What I intend to ſay upon it, I ſhall reduce to theſe Heads. I. The Grammatical Conſtruction. II. The Metaphors, and Figures, and Rhetorical Schemes of Speech. III. The Decorum, or Suitableneſs of the Matter, or the Things themſelves. IV. The Method.

I. The Grammatical Conſtruction and Propriety of Speaking. It has been by many obſerv'd, that there is a great Reſemblance between the Style of the Old Teſtament, and that of *Homer*, the moſt ancient Book we have beſides; and it is likewiſe obſervable, that thoſe things which are by ſome look'd upon as Defects in the Scripture-Style, as the uſing one Gender, or one Number, or Caſe, or Tenſe, for another, the putting Participles for Verbs, the Comparative or Superlative for the Poſitive, Actives for Paſſives, or Paſſives for Actives, are particularly taken notice of by [a] *Plutarch*, as Excellencies in *Homer*; and he ſays, they were uſual in Proſe as well as in Verſe, amongſt

[a] In vita Homeri.

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the Antients. Whatſoever Solœciſms or Improprieties of Speech are to be found in any part of the Scriptures, the like have been obſerv'd [b] in *Homer*, *Æſchylus*, *Sophocles*, *Pindar* and *Apollonius Rhodius*, by their ſeveral Scholiaſts, in *Thucydides* by *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus*, in *Pauſanias* by *Sylburgius*, and in *Tully* by [c] *Eraſmus* and others. But it is remarkable, that [d] *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus* afterwards in his *Roman* Antiquities, imitated *Thucydides* in thoſe very things for which he before had cenſur'd him. *Xenophon* is obſerv'd by [e] *Helladius*, not to be always exact in point of Grammar; which he aſcribes to his military Life, and his Converſation with Strangers. Many Solœciſms are found in the ancient Inſcriptions, and in *Hyginus*, an Author, as it has been generally ſuppos'd, of *Auguſtus*'s Age, which are to be imputed rather to the Cuſtom of Speech amongſt the Vulgar, than to the Miſtake of theſe Authors. For in Languages ſo difficult as the *Greek* and *Latin* are, it was impoſſible but that the Common-people muſt often make great Miſtakes, which by degrees became cuſtomary, and were the Character of the [f] *Low* and *Plebeian Style*: and in the *Greek* Tongue they aſcribed their Solœciſms to the particular *Dialect* of the People, among whom they were moſt in uſe.

The Stoicks, who were the moſt numerous and flouriſhing Sect of Philoſophers in the Primitive times of Chriſtianity, had little regard to the Rules of Grammar: for they were caution'd by their Maſter *Chryſippus* not to be careful about ſuch Niceties: and they are highly commended by a [g] great Critick, for expreſſing their Thoughts, though commonly with Words very proper and ſignificant, yet in a Style

[b] Vid. Dan. Heinſ. Proleg. ad exercit. Sacr.
[c] Dialog. Ciceron. [d] H. Stephan. in Dionyſ. Halic. c. 16. Caſaub. Animad. in eund. p. 30. [e] Apud Phot. cod. cclxxix.
[f] Vid. Schefferi Præfat. & Munkeri Diſſertat. in Hyginum.
[g] Mer. Caſaub. in M. Antonin. l. i. n. 14.

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ſo free from all Affectation or Curioſity, as cometh next to the Simplicity of the Holy Scriptures.

The Deſign of Revelation is not to teach Words but Things, and to expreſs them in ſuch Words as may ſerve for that purpoſe; and if an improper Word or a Soloeciſm may be more ſerviceable to that end, it is beyond all Exactneſs and Propriety of Language. The Truth is, it is a Sign of a little Genius to be over-curious about Words, as *Demoſthenes* intimated in his Reply to *Æſchines*, telling him that the Fortunes of *Greece* did not depend upon a Criticiſm; which *Tully* mentioning, ſays, it is [h] an eaſy matter to pitch upon a Word ſpoken in the Heat of Diſcourſe, and in cool Blood to make ſport with it. But this is at large treated of by *Longinus*; and *Seneca* ſpeaks excellently to this purpoſe; [i] If you obſerve, ſays he, that a Man's Speech is too nice and critical, be ſure that he has a Mind taken up with little things. A Man of a great Mind ſpeaks with the leſs Caution and Exactneſs, whatſoever he ſays; he is better aſſur'd of the matter of his diſcourſe, than to trouble himſelf much about Words. This is the reaſon that ſo many great Authors have afforded ſo much Work for the Criticks and Scholiaſts, to blame, or to excuſe them, and very often to commend them for departing from the common Forms. [k] *Plutarch* aſcribes it to the Aſſurance, which *Homer* had of himſelf, and his great Skill in his own Art, that he ventur'd to tranſgreſs the common Rules in the firſt Verſe of his Poem. And [l] St. *Jerom* obſerving, that St. *Paul* uſes the

[h] Facile eſt enim verbum aliquod ardens (ut ita dicam) notare, idque reſtinctis jam animorum incendiis, irridere, Cic. Orator.

[i] Cujuſcunque orationem videris ſollicitam & politam, ſcito animum quoque non minus eſſe puſillis occupatum. Magnus ille remiſſiùs loquitur & ſecuriùs; quæcunque dicit, plus habent fiduciæ, quam curæ, Sen. Epiſt. cxv.

[k] Plut. de Profect. Virtut. Sentiend.

[l] Hier. ad Algaſ. Qu. 10.

Words

Words and Phraſes of *Cilicia*, ſays, it is no wonder, when *Virgil* follow'd the Forms of Speech likewiſe of his own Country. And St. *Jerom* himſelf, who perfectly underſtood the Purity of the *Latin* Tongue, and wrote it with great Elegancy; ſometimes [m] purpoſely uſed an improper Word, that was better underſtood. The Old Teſtament has nothing of this nature, but what, for ought that can now be known, was moſt proper in the *Hebrew* Tongue, whatever it may be in others. And as to the New Teſtament, it is penn'd in ſuch Words, and in ſuch Conſtruction of Grammar, as might render it moſt uſeful, not according to the *Attick*, or any other Dialect, which was known to ſo few in compariſon, that it was confin'd, as it were, to one Country, or known only to the Learned in others; but in ſuch *Greek*, as was generally underſtood in the remote and numerous Nations, where that Language was ſpoken. For which reaſon ſo many Expreſſions are taken from the Tranſlation of the *Septuagint*, which was ſo much in uſe amongſt the Proſelytes in all parts of the World. In the Preface to the Book of *Eccleſiaſticus*, it is obſerv'd, that the *ſame things uttered in Hebrew, and tranſlated into another tongue, have not the ſame force in them*; and [n] St. *Jerom* ſhews, that there was a neceſſity of making uſe of ſuch Words, as were firſt taken from the Heathen Fables, in tranſlating the Scriptures, which had no Affinity to them: but when Men ſpeak or write, they muſt do it ſo as to be underſtood, unleſs they will do it to no purpoſe; and therefore muſt take ſuch Words as are to be had, and are intelligible to thoſe for whoſe Benefit they write, and they muſt be contented too with ſuch Grammatical Conſtruction, as well as with ſuch Words, as ſhall be found expedient to the end

[m] Ad Princip. Expoſ. Pſ. xliv. & in Ezech. xl.
[n] Hieron. ad Amos, v. 8. & in Epiſt. ad Galat. iii. 1.

for

for which they write. [o] Sometimes again it was neceſſary to frame new Words, to expreſs the Propriety of the *Hebrew* Language, as *Tully* has done in his Books of Philoſophy, to explain in *Latin* the Terms of it in the *Greek* Tongue. And in all reſpects Men muſt accommodate themſelves to their Subject, and to the Capacities of thoſe for whom they undertake to diſcourſe upon it.

II. Metaphors, and Rhetorical Schemes or Figures of Speech. Men differ as much in their Forms and Schemes of ſpeaking, as they do in their Manners or Cuſtoms, or in their Complexions and Diſpoſitions. Every Man has ſomething peculiar in his way of expreſſing himſelf, which is ſo eaſily diſtinguiſh'd by good Criticks from that of others, that they ſeldom fail in it, though there can be no abſolute Certainty in things of this nature. And [p] *Photius* obſerving that ſome Orations which paſs under the Name of *Demoſthenes*, were, by reaſon of the difference of Style, aſcribed by certain Criticks to other Authors, makes this Remark, that he had often taken notice of a great Reſemblance in the Style of Orations made by different Authors, and of as great an Unlikeneſs in the Style of thoſe made by the ſame Man. But the different Character and Manner of Style in the ſeveral Countries and Nations of the World is much more eaſily diſcern'd, than it can be in particular Men of the ſame Country. The *Lacedemonians* were noted for uſing but few Words even in [q] *Homer*'s time: And [r] *Thucydides*, when he makes a long Oration, for their Embaſſadors, is forced to put an Excuſe into their Mouths, for ſpeaking contrary to the Cuſtom of their Country. The People of *Caria*, *Phrygia*, and *Myſia*, were not at all polite and neat [s], ſays *Tully*, and there-

[o] Hieron. in Galat. i. 2. [p] Phot. cod. cclxv.
[q] Iliad. iii. v. 214. [r] Hiſt. l. iv. c. 17.
[s] Adſciverunt aptum ſuis auribus opimum quoddam & tanquam adipatæ dictionis genus, Cic. Orator.

fore

fore they loved a groſs and ſlovenly kind of Diſcourſe, which the *Rhodians*, not far diſtant from them, never approved of, and the other *Greeks* liked it much leſs, but the *Athenians* could not endure it. [t] There were three kinds of Style among the *Greeks*, the *Attick*, the *Aſiatick* and the *Rhodian*; and *Tully* beſides makes the *Aſiatick* twofold. The *Attick* was cloſe and comprehenſive; the *Aſiatick* was quite contrary to this, and was very lofty, figurative and copious; which ſome aſſigned to other Cauſes, but *Quintilian* more truly thinks it proceeded from the different nature and temper of the *Athenians* and *Aſiaticks*. The third kind of Style was the *Rhodian*, which was of a middle nature betwixt the other two, neither ſo conciſe as the *Attick*, nor ſo redundant as the *Aſiatick*, but was a mixture of both; the Genius of that People inclining rather to the *Aſiatick*, but *Æſchines*, in his Baniſhment at *Rhodes*, reformed their Style, and faſhioned it after the *Attick* manner, as far as the *Rhodian* Genius would admit of it.

It would be endleſs to make Obſervations upon particular Authors. *Xenophon* and *Plato* have not eſcaped the Cenſure of *Longinus*; and *Demoſthenes* and *Cicero*, beſides what hath been objected to them in particular, fall under the general cenſure, which [u] *Seneca* paſſeth upon all Authors of the greateſt Fame and Merit; but he adds, that there is no certain Rule for Style, which is continually altered by the uſe and cuſtom of the place.

Both the Language and Actions of the Eaſtern Nations, eſpecially in the earlier Ages of the World, had ſomething more vehement and paſſionate in them, than thoſe of theſe Weſtern Countries. The Stiles and Titles of their Kings are a remarkable inſtance of

[t] Quintil. Inſtit. lib. 12. c. 10. Cic. Brut.

[u] Nullum ſine venia placuit ingenium. Da mihi quemcunque vis magni nominis virum, dicam, quid illi ætas ſua ignoverit, quid in illo ſciens diſſimulaverit. Sen. Epiſt. cxiv.

this;

this; witneſs that of [x] *Sapores, Rex Regum Sapor, particeps ſiderum, frater Solis & Lunæ Conſtantio Cæſari, fratri meo, Salutem plurimam dico.* And they retain the like Titles to this day; [y] the Grand Signior's is in ſome things the ſame, in others more extravagant; he is ſtiled, *God on Earth, the Shadow of God, Brother to the Sun and Moon, the Giver of all Earthly Crowns.* The King of [z] *Æthiopia* calls himſelf, *the King at whoſe Name the Lions tremble.*

The *Romans* themſelves, who uſed greater modeſty of Style, and more gravity in their Actions than many other Nations, practis'd divers things in their Orations and Pleadings, which amongſt us would be very ſtrange and abſurd. Thus [a] *C. Gracchus*, a great and popular Orator at *Rome*, was wont to have one ſtand behind him with a Flute, to give him the true Key, to which he was to raiſe his Voice; which would go near to make the beſt Orator amongſt us ridiculous. It was cuſtomary likewiſe with the *Romans*, to uſe all Arts to raiſe the Paſſions, by Actions and Repreſentations, as well as by Words: [b] Sometimes they would hang up a Picture, repreſenting the Fact about which they were to ſpeak, and the Accuſers were wont to produce in open Court a Bloody Sword, or the Garments of the Wounded, and the Bones, if any had been taken out of their Wounds, or to unbind the Wounds, or ſhew the Scars. [c] *Quarum rerum ingens plerumque vis eſt, velut in rem preſentem animos hominum ducentium.* Theſe and other things more ſtrange to us, were practiſed by the moſt famous Orators of their Times amongſt the *Romans*, by which they ſpoke to the Eyes, as it were, of their Hearers; and therefore theſe may well be reckoned amongſt the Figures and Modes of Rhetorick, where-

[x] Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 17. c. 5. [y] Ricaut's *Hiſt.* lib. 1. c. 2.
[z] *Letter of* David, *K. of* Æthiop. *in* Geddes *Church Hiſt. of* Æthiop.
[a] Cic. de Orat. lib. 3. Quintil. Inſtitut. lib. 1. c. 10.
[b] Cic. pro P. Sextio. [c] Quintil. ib. lib. 6. c. 1.

by

by they gained upon the Affections of the [d] People. *Tully* tells us of himſelf, that he took up a Child ſometimes, and held it in his Arms, to move Compaſſion; and that when [e] *M. Callidius* had accuſed *Q. Gallius* of an attempt to poiſon him, and had made it out by clear proof, he urged this as a ſufficient Objection againſt all that *Callidius* had ſaid, that he had not expreſs'd any Paſſion in his Pleading, he had not ſmote his Forehead, nor his Thigh, nor (which was the leaſt thing he could have done, if his Accuſation had been true) he had not ſo much as ſtamp'd with his Foot. *Callidius* had all the Accompliſhments of an Orator, but this of moving the Paſſions by ſuch means; and the want of this was looked upon as a very great defect in him. Upon the Death of the two *Scipio*'s in *Spain*, when the ſignal of Battel was given by the new General, [f] *Livy* deſcribes the *Roman* Army weeping, and knocking their Heads, and throwing themſelves upon the Ground. And what could a Speech at any time have availed with ſuch Men, that had been delivered in a cold and unaffecting manner? [g] *Cæſar* himſelf wept, and rent his Garment in a Speech which he made to his Soldiers, as ſoon as he had paſs'd the *Rubicon*. The [h] like happened to *Alexander* and his Soldiers, upon their ſubmiſſion to him, after a Mutiny: And [i] he wept upon other occaſions. Weeping was ſo uſual with the Warriors of ancient Times, that we need not wonder, that when they found their Wives and Children were taken captive by the *Amalekites*, *David and the People that were with him, lift up their Voice, and wept, until they had no more power to weep*, 1 Sam. xxx. 4. Whoever obſerves their Orations, would think that the ancient *Greeks*

[d] Cic. Orator.

[e] Nulla perturbatio animi, nulla corporis; frons non percuſſa, non femur pedis (quod minimum eſt) nulla ſupploſio. Cic. Brut.

[f] Liv. lib. 25. c. 38. [g] Suet. Jul. Cæſ. c. 33.

[h] Arr. de Expedit. Alex. l. 7. [i] Id. de Reb. Indic.

and

and *Romans* had Tears more at command than Men now have: for the Orators wept as freely upon every occaſion, as if that were true of them all, which [k] *Æſchines* ſaid of *Demoſthenes*, that it was eaſier for them to weep, than for others to laugh. And ſometimes not only the Orators themſelves, [l] but the Judges, and the whole Auditory, were all in Tears.

The great Art of Oratory conſiſted in Action, (by which is to be underſtood both the Voice and Geſture) as *Demoſthenes*, that beſt knew, declared, and therefore though nothing were more common than for Hiſtorians, and Poets, and Philoſophers, to read their Works to the People, yet the Orators ſeldom read their Orations; however, [m] *Tully* ſometimes did it. And from the time that *Auguſtus* read his Speeches, which he had occaſion to uſe in the Senate, or to the People or Soldiers; it grew into a cuſtom by his Example and Encouragement, and ſo continu'd, as we find by frequent inſtances in *Dion Caſſius*.

The common [n] Forms of Speech, even among the *Roman* Country-men, were ſo Metaphorical, that they will ſcarce bear a literal Verſion into our Language. And the Philoſophers themſelves had Cuſtoms, which may ſeem very odd to us: It [o] was a cuſtom among them, when they propounded a Queſtion, to offer with it a dried Fig, and he that accépted of the Fig, thereby undertook to anſwer the Queſtion.

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[k] Æſchin. contr. Cteſiph.

[l] Cic. pro Plancio. Pro Milon. Pro Rabirio.

[m] Recitetur oratio, quæ propter ejus magnitudinem dicta de Scripto eſt. Cic. pro Plancio. Ac ne periculum memoriæ adiret, aut in ediſcendo tempus abſumeret, inſtituit recitare omnia. Suet. in Auguſt. c. 84. vid. ib. c. 89. Quanquam Orationes & noſtri quidam & Græci lectitaverunt. Plin. lib. 7. Epiſt. 17.

[n] Qua (tranſlatione) frequentiſſime Sermo omnis utitur non modo urbanus, ſed etiam Ruſticorum: Siquidem eſt eorum gemmare vites, ſitire agros, lætas eſſe ſegetes, luxurioſa frumenta. Nihil horum parum audacter, &c. Cic. Orator.

[o] Joac. Kuhnii obſervat. ad Diog. Laert.

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The Figurative Expreſſions of the Prophets, and their Types and Parables, were ſuitable to the Cuſtoms of the Places and Times wherein they lived, and very fit to give a lively and affecting Repreſentation of the Meſſage they had to deliver. Thus for inſtance, it was a cuſtomary thing in thoſe Countries to rend their Garments, to pluck off their Hair, to go barefoot, and cover their Faces in time of Grief and Trouble, which would be looked upon as a certain ſign of Diſtraction amongſt us, but was commonly done by the graveſt and wiſeſt Men in thoſe Parts of the World. And the Expreſſions of their Joy and other Paſſions, were proportionable to thoſe of their Sorrow. Now it was reaſonable, that the Prophets, in delivering their Prophecies, ſhould accommodate themſelves both in their Words and Actions, to the People to whom they were to be delivered: For elſe they would never have been regarded, or would have made little or no impreſſion upon their Minds, which cauſed the falſe Prophets to take the ſame method, 1 *Kings* xxii. 2.

It is [p] *Origen*'s and *Maimonides*'s Obſervation, that the Prophets ſometimes had Matters of ſmall importance revealed to them, as when *Samuel* acquainted *Saul*, that the Aſſes were found, 1 *Sam.* ix. 20. that they might keep the People from going to falſe Prophets to be ſatisfy'd in ſuch things; beſides that, by this means they gained Authority to be rely'd upon, when they had Affairs of the greateſt conſequence to foretel. And there was reaſon, that in every caſe, they ſhould make all neceſſary Allowances for the Infirmities of the People with whom they had to do, and ſhould uſe all fitting compliances with them, that they might the more prevail with them for their good.

[p] Origen. contr. Celſ. lib. 1. Maimon. in Seder Zeraim. Præf. p. 7.

It is the cuſtom of the Prophets, as [q] St. *Jerom* obſerves, when they ſpeak againſt *Babylon*, the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites*, the *Philiſtines*, and other Nations, to uſe many Expreſſions and Idioms of the Language of the People concerning whom they ſpeak. [r] One who was as converſant in the *Jewiſh* Learning as moſt Men have been, tells us, that their Books abound every where with Parables, that Nation inclining by a kind of natural Genius to this ſort of Rhetorick. And St. *Jerom* had, in his time, obſerved, that the *Syrians*, but eſpecially the People of *Paleſtine*, were wont to uſe Parables in all their Diſcourſe. And it is to be conſidered, that ſeveral things, which are ſet down as Matter of Fact, might not be actually done, but only repreſented as done, to make the more lively impreſſion upon the Hearers and Readers, who well enough underſtood, that it was not neceſſary, that theſe things ſhould be actually performed; but they might be only parabolical Deſcriptions, or Repreſentations of Matter of Fact, the better to illuſtrate and convey thoſe Commands and Inſtructions to their Minds, which were to be delivered. Thus [s] St. *Jerom* and *Maimonides* underſtood *Ezekiel*'s lying on his ſide for Three hundred and ninety Days, and *Hoſea*'s marrying an Adultereſs, only as Similitudes, or Parables and Figures of Speech; and thus, from the ancient *Rabbins*, they interpret both what is related of theſe two Prophets, and that which is ſaid of *Jeremiah*'s hiding his Girdle in *Euphrates*. This was the moſt intelligible and effectual way that could be made uſe of to a People, among whom ſuch figurative Expreſſions were uſual, and known to mean no more than

[q] Hier. in Abdiam.

[r] Lightf. Hebr. & Talmud. exercit. *on* Matt. 13. 3. Familiare eſt Syris & maxime Palæſtinis ad omnem ſermonem ſuum Parabolas jungere, &c. Hier. *in* Matt. 18. 23.

[s] Hier. in Hoſe. Proæm. & Comment. in c. 1. Maimon. More Nevoch. Part. 2. c. 46.

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what they were intended for. So *Jeremiah* is ſaid to to be [t] *ſet over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to deſtroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant*, Jer. i. 10. becauſe he was appointed to propheſie of all theſe things. *Ezekiel* ſpeaks of himſelf, as coming *to deſtroy the City*, becauſe he propheſied that it ſhould be deſtroyed, *Ezek*, xl. 3. and the ſame Prophet, in his Deſcription of the City and the Temple, has delineated the Temple larger than all the earthly *Jeruſalem*, and *Jeruſalem* larger than the whole Land of *Canaan*, to ſhew the *Jews* the neceſſity of underſtanding him in a myſtical and ſpiritual Senſe; as [u] one has obſerved, who very well underſtood the dimenſions of both. And thus *Ezekiel* was alſo carried from place to place *in Viſion* only, as the Text ſeems to expreſs, *Ezek.* xi. 1. xl. 1, 2. as the *Jews* [x] in St. *Jerom*'s time underſtood it, and as the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe interprets it. But *Hoſea* might be commanded either in viſion or in reality to marry a Woman who had been an Adultereſs, but [y] afterwards became chaſte and vertuous; thereby to ſet an Example to the *Iſraelites*, who had *gone a whoring after other Gods*, that if they would forſake their falſe Gods, and return to the true God, the God of their Fathers, he would ſtill accept and receive them, in like manner as the Prophet had took an Adultereſs to Wife, upon aſſurance that ſhe would prove faithful to him. However this be underſtood, theſe Actions, and others of like nature, are to be look'd upon no otherwiſe than as the Style of Scripture, or as certain ways of expreſſing the Divine Will to Men. For

[t] Sic dicuntur Hiſtorici eos occidere, quorum cædem narrant. Caſaub. Comment. ad Theophraſt. Charact. περὶ λοιδορίας.

[u] Lightf. *Proſpect of the Temple*, ch. 11. [x] Hier. Præf. in Dan.

[y] Nec culpandus Propheta interim, ut ſequamur hiſtoriam, ſi meretricem converterit ad pudicitiam, ſed potius laudandus, quod ex mala bonam fecerit id. Comment. in Hoſ. c. 1.

the Mind may be expreſs'd by [z] Actions as well as by Words, and whatever Actions were perform'd with this intention, properly come under the notion of Style, or different ways and modes of Expreſſion; and all Objections made againſt them under any other notion, proceed upon a miſtake, and can be of no force.

The Prophetick Schemes of Speech which ſeem moſt ſtrange to us, were uſual with the Eaſtern Nations, as [a] Mr. *Mede* ſhews of the *Indians*, *Perſians* and *Egyptians*. The *Revelation* of St. *John* chiefly conſiſts of Alluſions to the Cuſtoms, and Hiſtory, and Notions, and Language of the *Jews*, as he and Dr. *Lightfoot* have ſhewn in many places, which are moſt contrary to our manner of ſpeaking. And ſome Paſſages allude to the cuſtoms of other Nations, well known and practiſed at that time. Thus the Slaves were wont to have their Maſter's Name or Mark upon their Forehead, and the Soldiers to have the Name of their General upon their Right Hand; and the like Marks were wont to be received by Men, in token that they had devoted themſelves to their Gods: from whence we read of the Mark of the *Beaſt* received by his Worſhippers, *in their Right Hand, or in their Foreheads*, [b] *Rev.* xiii. 16. and of his *Father's Name written in the Foreheads* of thoſe that ſtand in Mount *Sion* with the Lamb, *Rev.* xiv. 1. St. *Paul* alludes to the *Grecian* Games in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, who were much addicted to thoſe Sports, and had one ſort of them, the *Iſthmian*, perform'd among them, 1 *Cor.* ix. 24, 25, and he alludes to the diſtinction among the *Romans*, between Freemen and Slaves: For which he gives this reaſon, that it was in condeſcenſion to them, *I ſpeak after the manner of Men, becauſe of the Infirmity of your Fleſh*, Rom. vi. 19. *Melchiſedec* is

[z] Eſt enim Actio, quaſi corporis quædam eloquentia. Cic. Orator.
[a] Comment. in Apocal. Part. 1. [b] Vid. Grot. ad loc.

ſaid

said to be *without father, without mother, without* * *descent*, Heb. vii. 3. because his Pedigree is unknown; which was a most significant way of Expression to the *Jews*, who were so careful and exact in their Genealogies. But the very same manner of Expression is also us'd [c] by *Livy*, *Horace*, *Seneca*, and *Dion Cassius*, upon the like occasions.

There is much of Nature, but very much likewise of Use and Custom, in the several Schemes and Forms of Rhetorick. We meet with a sudden Change of the Person speaking, *Jer.* xvi. 19, 20, 21. xvii. 13. and with interlocutory Discourse, *Isa.* lxiii. and many places of Scripture are obscure to us, for want of distinguishing the Persons who speak: Thus, for instance, *Jer.* xx. 14. the Prophet seems transported abruptly, from one Extreme to another, but if they be the Words of the wicked (mention'd *ver.* 13.) under the Divine Vengeance, from the 14th *ver.* to the end of the *Chapter*, the Sense will be more easy. This abrupt Change of the Person is taken notice of by *Longinus*, as an Excellency in *Homer*, *Hecataus*, and *Demosthenes*; and the want of distinguishing the Persons speaking, has been a great Cause of misunderstanding the Scriptures, [d] as *Justin Martyr* and *Origen* observe.

Many Instances of the like nature might be given in the best Heathen Poets. And the reading the ancient Poets, is the best help for the understanding all other Authors of great Antiquity; for the ancienter any Author is, the nearer his Style comes to Poetry. The

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* Ἀγενεαλόγητος.

[c] Patre nullo, matre serva, Liv. l. iv. c. 3.——nullis majoribus ortos, Hor. Serm. l. i. sat. 6.——duos Romanos reges esse, quorum alter Patrem non habet, alter Matrem, Nam de Servii Matre dubitatur: Anci Pater nullus; Numæ nepos dicitur, Sen. Epist. cviii.—— ἀπάτωρ & αὐτὸς (Σηβήρος) ἦν ἔμπροσθεν χρόνον ὢν ἀφανείας ὄντος, Dion. Cass. l. lxxvi.

[d] Justin. Apol. 2. Origen. Philocal. c. 7.

firſt deſign of Writing was to delight, ſo as to be the better able to inſtruct, which made Verſe much more ancient than Proſe; and tho' it be natural for Men to ſpeak in Proſe, and not in Verſe, yet, it ſeems, the humour of the *Greeks* would not bear the writing Philoſophy in Proſe, till the time of *Cyrus*; for then [e] *Pliny* tells us, *Pherecydes* firſt wrote in Proſe, which muſt be underſtood of Philoſophy, for he aſcribes the firſt Writing of Proſe in Hiſtory to *Cadmus Mileſius*. [f] *Orpheus*, *Heſiod*, *Parmenides*, *Xenophanes*, *Empedocles*, *Thales*, and *Eudoxus*, wrote their Philoſophy in Verſe. And the ancient Writers now extant in Proſe, *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Xenophon*, have many Expreſſions, which are ſeldom or never met withal beſides, but in the Poets. *H. Stephens* made a Collection of the Poetical Words us'd by *Xenophon*, which is prefix'd to his Works. And the Orators both among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, were as exact and curious in the Feet and Meaſure of their Proſe, as the Poets could be in Verſe. Great part of the Scriptures is in Verſe, and the different way of writing in different Ages and Nations, appears in nothing more, than in the ſeveral ſorts of Poetry. That way of writing all Verſe in Rhime, which in theſe parts of the World is moſt in uſe and eſteem, would have been ridiculous to the *Greeks* and *Romans*: Tho' the uſe of Rhime in Verſe is ſo far from being without Example in Antiquity, that it is perhaps the moſt ancient of all ways of writing Verſe. Acroſticks, tho' of no eſteem, and little us'd in many Ages and Countries, are of great Antiquity [g] among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, as well as in the Eaſtern Nations. Verſes compoſed in the Acroſtick and Alphabetical way, were found to be a help to the Memory, and this Benefit, and the Ornament which it was then ſuppos'd to give to Poems, is the

[e] Plin. Hiſt. l. v. c. 29. l. vii. c. 56. Vid. Harduin. ad loc.
[f] Plut. de Pythiæ Orac. [g] Cic. de Divin. l. 2. §. 3.

cauſe

cause why it is sometimes used in the Scriptures: and sometimes the Inspiration was so strong upon the Writers Mind, as to interrupt the Art and Method, which he had propos'd to himself, as *Psal.* xxv. and cxlv. or perhaps it might be customary upon certain occasions to omit some Letter in the Alphabet in such Compositions, for reasons which we are ignorant of, but which might be very satisfactory and agreeable to the Sense of those Times and Countries. [h] The Ὠδὴ ἄσιγμος is an Example of this among the *Greeks*, us'd by *Pindar* and other ancient Poets. The old [i] *Spartan*, *Dorick* and *Æolick* Dialect chang'd Σ into P, the rough Sound of this Letter being more agreeable, it seems, to those People; and if any of them had written Acrosticks and Alphabetical Poems, Σ would have been omitted. It appears by what is yet remaining of the Old *Roman* Laws, that, on the contrary, the *Romans* sometimes us'd *S* for *R*; as *Asa* for *Ara*, *Casmen* for *Carmen*. Rhopalick Verses, which begin with a Monosyllable, every Word increasing by one Syllable more than the former, are to be found in [k] *Homer*: and the *Leonine* or Monkish Verses with a double Rhime, one in the middle, and the other at the end, are not without Precedent, but seems from [l] *Virgil* to have been anciently us'd in Charms: To say nothing of the Poems compos'd of divers sorts of Verse, and fram'd into the shape of several things by *Simmias Rhodius*, some of which are ascribed to *Theocritus*. The Repetitions so frequent in *Homer*, were not for want of Words, (for no Author ever wanted them less than he) but out of Choice, though later Poets have not thought fit to imitate him in this, and *Martial* turn'd it to Ridicule. It is certain, that nothing

[h] Dionys. Halicarn. περὶ Συνθεσ. Ὀνομ. Athenæ l. x. c. 21.
[i] Casaub. in Athen. l. viii. c. 11.
[k] ὦ μακαρ Ἀτρεΐδη, μοιρηγενές, ὀλβιόδαιμον, Iliad. iii. v. 182.
[l] Limus ut hic durescit, & hæc ut cera liquescit,
Uno eodemque igne, Ecl. 8.

is more various, than the Wit and Fancy of Man, and it is as certain, that whoever would write to any purpoſe, muſt write in ſome ſuch manner, as the Temper of the People, to whom he writes, will bear, and as their Cuſtoms require.

But before I leave this particular, it may be proper to conſider the Style of Scripture, in the Metaphorical and Figurative uſe of Words, in ſpeaking of the Works and Attributes of God. There never was any Book written in a ſtrict and literal Propriety of Words, becauſe all Languages abound in Metaphors, which by conſtant uſe become perhaps better known to the Natives of a Country, than the original Words themſelves, and in proceſs of time often cauſe them to be quite laid aſide. But then this borrow'd and metaphorical Senſe of Words may be very ſtrange to Men of other Countries, eſpecially when they are taken from things peculiar to the place, where they are us'd.

This uſe of Metaphors ariſeth partly from the Likeneſs that is perceiv'd between things, which makes one thing to be expreſs'd by another, and gives a delightful Illuſtration to the things diſcours'd of, and partly from our want of fit Words to expreſs the various natures of things, eſpecially of things ſpiritual, which we commonly ſpeak of in negative terms, and rather deny, that they are like things ſenſible, than poſitively affirm what they are: Thus we ſay, that they are immaterial, inviſible, incorruptible, *&c.* And when we ſpeak poſitively of them, we muſt uſe ſuch Words, as ſenſible Objects can furniſh us withal, ſince we can have no other; for we underſtand their Nature ſo imperfectly, that we are not able to frame a Language on purpoſe to expreſs it; and he who ſhould go about ſuch a Work, would neither be underſtood by others, nor well know what he meant himſelf. But of all Beings, God himſelf is ſo far above our Comprehenſion, that we can never ſpeak of

him

him in Expreſſions ſuitable to his Divine Nature, and therefore when true Conceptions are had of him, it is fitteſt to ſpeak of him in ſuch terms, as may ſerve to raiſe and preſerve in us a due Senſe of God's Honour, and of our Duty to him. The Reaſons then, why God is often ſpoken of in the Scriptures, after the manner in which we are wont to ſpeak of Men, may be reduced to theſe Particulars.

1. The Uſe of Metaphorical and Figurative Expreſſions is uſual in all Languages, and no Language is ſufficient to ſet forth the Majeſty and Attributes of God.

2. The peculiar Nature and Genius of the *Hebrew* Tongue, inclin'd or conſtrain'd the Writers, in that Language, to expreſs themſelves in this manner, *Gen.* ix. 5. *at the hand of every beaſt will I require it*, that is, I will require it of every Beaſt. The Hand of the River is the Side of the River, *Exod.* ii. 5. the Hand of the way is the way-ſide, *Pſal.* cxl. 5. and the Hand of the Sword is the Power of the Sword, *Job* v. 20. *Pſal.* lxiii. 10. The Son of the Bow is the Arrow, *Job* xli. 28. And when in our Tranſlation we read, *Man is born unto trouble as the ſparks fly upwards*, it is in the Original, *as the ſons of the burning coal lift up to fly*, Job v. 7. The *horn of the ſon of oil* ſignifies in our way of expreſſion, *a very fruitful hill*, Iſa. v. 1. and *Horn* ſignify'd Strength in the *Hebrew*, as familiarly, as *Robur* or *Oak* ſignifies the ſame in *Latin*. And not only the Vallies are ſaid to *ſhout and ſing*, Pſal. lxv. 13. but the *beſt Fruits in the land* are in the *Hebrew* call'd *the ſinging of the land*, Gen. xliii. 11. The Word *Rock* is often uſed to denote the Almighty Power of God, and by the Septuagint and Vulgar *Latin* is ſometimes tranſlated *God*. *For their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themſelves being judges*, Deut. xxxii. 31. Thoſe Verſions render it, *their Gods*, and *our God*: and in like manner, *ver.* 4, 15, 18. *Pſal.* xxxi. 3. lxxiii. 26. *Is there any God beſides me? yea there is no God, I know*

not

not any, Iſa. xlvi. 8. in the *Hebrew* it is, *there is no Rock*, as the Margin of our Bibles remarks. Ears, Mouth, Hands, and Heart, are aſcrib'd to the Earth, or Land. *Sin* in the *Hebrew* ſignifies a *Sin-offering*, as it is tranſlated, and muſt of neceſſity be underſtood in many places of Scripture, and in this Senſe Chriſt was made *ſin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Sometimes *Sin* is us'd for the Puniſhment of Sin, *Gen.* iv. 13. *Zech.* xiv. 19. We read *Joſh.* xxiv. 27. that *Joſhua ſaid unto all the people, behold this ſtone ſhall be a witneſs unto us. For it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he ſpake unto us, it ſhall therefore be a witneſs unto you, leſt ye deny your God.* This might have been a very improper and unintelligible Speech to another People, but was moſt ſignificant and emphatical to the People of *Iſrael*, who well underſtood upon what account ſenſe was often aſcribed to inanimate things, as *Gen.* xxxi. 52. *Numb.* xx. 8. *Deut.* iv. 26. xxx. 19. xxxii. 1. and afterwards frequently by the Prophets.

3. Every Expreſſion in a Parable is not to be taken in a ſtrict Senſe; neither is it neceſſary, that whatever is ſet down in the Scripture, muſt therefore be of divine Inſpiration, or abſolutely true: for there we find the Speeches and Sayings of divers Men not inſpired, and of ſome very wicked Men, nay of the Devils themſelves. So that we are to enquire, by whom and in what manner the Words were ſpoken, before we undertake to defend them. Wine is ſaid to *cheer God and Man*, Judg. ix. 13. But this is ſpoken by the Vine in *Jotham*'s Parable. Yet there is nothing abſurd in it: for God, who is ſaid to rejoice in his Works, might well be ſaid to rejoice in the Fruit of the Vine, when he accepted of it in Drink-offerings.

4. An expreſs Law was made againſt the worſhipping of God under any Image or Similitude, and the People are put in mind, that they *ſaw no ſimilitude*, but only *heard a voice*, when the Lord ſpake to them from the Mount, *Deut.* iv. 12. and that he is without

Change

Change or Repentance, *Numb.* xxiii. 19. 1 *Sam.* xv. 29. *Malach.* iii. 6.

5. When this Caution had been given, and ſuch a Law made, it cannot be expected, but that the Divine Writers ſhould make uſe of ſuch Expreſſions, as were commonly uſed, and were as commonly underſtood in a metaphorical or improper Senſe, when applied to God, to give the more Force and Emphaſis to their Diſcourſe. [m] *Maimonides* has prov'd from the Propriety of the *Hebrew* Words, that the *Image* and *Likeneſs* of God, in which Man is ſaid to have been made, is to be underſtood of the Faculties of his Mind; and he lays this down as a general and known Rule amongſt the Jews, *Loquitur Lex ſecundum linguam Filiorum hominum*; and he likewiſe obſerves, that both *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* have in their Paraphraſes taken care to give the true Senſe of ſuch Expreſſions, as ſeem to imply any thing corporeal in God. God is ſaid to *ſmell a ſweet ſavour*, when *Noah* offer'd Burnt-offerings on the Altar, which he built after the Flood, *Gen.* viii. 21. In the *Hebrew* it is *a ſavour of Reſt*, as it is noted in the Margin: becauſe in the Acceptance of it, God ceas'd from his Anger, as *Buxtorf* obſerves from *Aben-Ezra*. He is ſaid to bear the People of *Iſrael* on *Eagles Wings*, Exod. xix. 4. We read of the Wings of the Lord God of *Iſrael*, Ruth ii. 12. of the Shadow of the Almighty, *Pſ.* xci. 1. of his Feathers, and the Shadow of his Wings, *Pſal.* xvii. 8. xci. 4. with Alluſion to the Wings of the Cherubims, that cover'd the Ark; which ſignify'd God's Protection of his People with as much care and tenderneſs, as the winged kind have for their young, *Matt.* xxiii. 37. The Scriptures make mention of his Eyes, and Hands, and Feet, to expreſs the Effects of thoſe Actions, which are perform'd by Men with theſe Members: and when it was ſaid, *it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*, Gen. vi. 6. This was well

[m] Maimon. More Nevoch. P^t i. c. 1, 26, 27, 28, 36, 48.

under-

underſtood to mean no more than that God acted, as Men are wont to do, when they change their Minds, and repent and grieve at what they have done, and that he would certainly deſtroy the World which he had made: for *Moſes* himſelf inſtructs the Children of *Iſrael*, that God is without any bodily Shape or Subſtance, and therefore cannot be ſaid to have any Heart, or to be griev'd at his Heart, in the ſame Senſe that it is ſaid of Men. And *Numb.* xxiii. 19. it is declared, that *God is not a man, that he ſhould lye, neither the Son of man, that he ſhould repent.* And when God ſays that *it repented him that he had ſet up Saul to be King*, 1 Sam. xv. 11. this is explain'd *ver.* 29. where we read, that *the ſtrength of Iſrael will not lye, nor repent; for he is not a man that he ſhould repent:* and yet again in the laſt verſe it is ſaid, that *the Lord repented, that he had made Saul King over Iſrael.* The moſt careleſs Writer could not ſo ſoon and ſo often forget himſelf: but what is ſaid of God's repenting, is to be taken in an improper and figurative Senſe, to imply that God would act in that caſe, as Men act when they repent of what they have done, tho' without any Change of Mind, or any Grief, or other Paſſion in him attending it: the Effect was the ſame as if God had repented; and therefore, by a *Metonymy*, the Effect is expreſs'd by that which in Men is wont to be the Cauſe of ſuch Effects, though in God Repentance was not the Cauſe of it; but the reaſon and ſtate of the caſe, which he had fully known and conſider'd from all Eternity, and therefore could not be ſurpriz'd, or mov'd to any Alteration of Judgment by it. *His ſoul was grieved for the miſery of Iſrael*, Judg. x. 16. or, it was *ſhortned*, as the *Hebrew* word is literally tranſlated in the Margin; that is, according to [n] *Maimonides*, the Lord's Mind was ſhorten'd from afflicting them, or he had no longer a mind to puniſh

[n] Maimon. More Nevoch. P^t i. c. 41, 47. P^t iii. c. 24.

them,

them. God has commanded, that our Anger ſhould be without Sin, and he is himſelf angry without the leaſt Paſſion or Commotion: but he is diſpleas'd with Sinners, becauſe he diſapproves of their evil Actions, and he is moſt angry and diſpleas'd with thoſe, whoſe Ways and Practices he moſt diſlikes; inſomuch that God often threatens *to pour out his fury*, upon impenitent Sinners, that is, to puniſh them in the moſt terrible manner, as their Sins deſerve; but juſt and neceſſary Puniſhment, how great ſoever it may be, is not the Effect of Paſſion, but of the higheſt Reaſon. When God is ſaid to ſee, the meaning is, that he knows what is done; when he is ſaid to hear, this ſignifies, that he underſtands what is ſaid. [o] *Now I know that thou feareſt God*, Gen. xxii. 12. that is, now I have had the Proof of it, and have made it evident, that I know it. *To prove thee, to know what was in thine heart*, Deut. viii. 2. is the ſame, as to make that appear, and become known, which I know to be in thine Heart. *Gen.* xi. 5. the Lord is ſaid to *come down to ſee* the City and Tower of *Babel*, and *Gen.* xviii. 20. *Becauſe the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and becauſe their ſin is very grievous, I will go down now and ſee, whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me, and if not, I will know:* which implies, that God is not forward or willing to puniſh, but that he proceeds as Men do in things about which they uſe moſt Care and Deliberation. God is repreſented as a good Governor, who is unwilling to believe ill Reports, and will make a full Enquiry and Inſpection into the caſe, before he puniſh Offenders; or in ſhort, here is an Illuſtration in Fact of that adorable Character, which God proclaims of himſelf, *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and a-*

[o] Non enim aliquid ignorat Deus, ut examinando cognoſcat, ſed ſciat Deus, ita dixit beatus Job, ut ſcire alios faciat, ſecundum illud: tentat vos Deus Dominus, ut ſciat, utrum diligatis eum, id eſt, ut ſcire cæteros faciat. Hieron. in Job. c. 31, 6.

bundant in goodneſs and truth, Exod. xxxiv. 6. God ſays, that he could not deſtroy *Sodom* till *Lot* was eſcaped out of it, *Gen.* xix. 22. and to *Moſes* he ſays, *Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may conſume them*, Exod. xxxii. 10. But we muſt not imagine, that the Reaſons and Motives which *Moſes* there repreſents to God in his Prayer in behalf of the People of *Iſrael*, could prevail more with him, than his own infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, or that he could not have preſerv'd *Lot* in the midſt of *Sodom*, as well as he deliver'd *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*, out of the Fiery Furnace. But theſe things are thus expreſs'd for an Encouragement in Righteouſneſs, and to teach us Dependence upon God; for the righteous *have power with God* as well as *with men*, and ſhall *prevail*, Gen. xxxii. 28. It was an exerciſe and Trial of the Faith and Charity of *Moſes*, and is propos'd as an Example of Faith and Charity to all, who ſhould read that account of him. Beſides, he was a Type of Chriſt, and, as ſuch, was to make Interceſſion and Atonement for the Sins of the People, *Exod.* xxxii. 30. For Chriſt, before his Coming in the Fleſh, exercis'd his Mediatory Power, as to the viſible Adminiſtration of it, by thoſe who were appointed to be his Types and Repreſentatives here upon Earth, which may give a ſatisfactory account of that Power, which *Abraham*, *Jacob* and *Moſes*, and others are ſaid to have had with God.

The Sum of all is, that to give the more Force and Life to the Diſcourſes of the Prophets, and to render them the more effectual to the ends, for which they were deſign'd, God, who is by the infinite Excellency of his Nature, uncapable of any Paſſion, is pleas'd to be repreſented as ſubject to Love, and Anger, and Hatred, and all the Paſſions of Humanity; and He, who knows perfectly all Events from Eternity, is contented even to ſeem ſometimes to doubt of the Effects of his Deſigns and Propoſals, and of the Events of

humane

humane Actions; to shew, as [p] *Origen*, St. *Jerom* and *Theodoret* have observ'd, the Freedom of Men, and to declare, that their Destruction is from themselves. He speaks to us in the Language of Men, and assumes to himself all the Passions of humane Nature, that by any means Sinners may be persuaded to turn to him; he is described as angry, and grieved at the Sins of Men, and as one, who rejoiceth at their Repentance: not that the Divine Nature can be capable of Anger, or Grief, or Rejoycing, which imply Change and Imperfection, and therefore must be impossible in the most absolutely perfect Being: but because Men are wont to be angry, when they punish, and to be grieved when those do amiss whom they would have do well, and are wont to rejoice when they begin to reform; therefore to set forth, that God will certainly punish unrepenting Sinners, and receive the returning Penitent, and reward the Righteous, both the Goodness and Justice of God are explain'd in such terms, as may most move and affect Men, to shew that the Punishments he inflicts, will in the end be as grievous, as if he receiv'd some loss and disappointment by the obstinacy of the Wicked; and that he will as bountifully reward the Good, as if they had done him some great benefit and kindness, and had made some addition to his own Joy and Happiness, which is infinite and eternal, and therefore uncapable of any.

3. The *Decorum*, or suitableness of the Matter in the style of Scripture. This is to be considered with respect to the Persons, the Occasion, and Time and Country; the Rules of Decency being variable according to Circumstances, not fix'd and immutable, as the Precepts of Morality are. [q] *Maimonides* has observ'd, that the Holy Tongue has no words to express things obscene: and 'tis very remarkable, that

[p] Origen Philocal. c. 23. Hieron. & Theodoret. ad Ezek. xi. 5.
[q] More Nevoch. Par. 3. c. 8.

in thoſe ruder Ages (as they are commonly reckon'd) the *Hebrews* had peculiar Forms of Decency in their Expreſſions, upon all occaſions which required them. And to *know* in that ſignification, which it hath, *Gen.* iv. 1. and in many other places of Scripture, was likewiſe uſed by the *Greeks*, and is particularly taken notice of by [r] *Hermogenes* for the modeſty of it. We find the Heroes of [s] *Homer* employ'd in as mean Offices as the Patriarchs; and [t] *Herodotus* declares, that in ancient Times, the *Greeks* had no Servants, but did their own work themſelves, or had no other help but that of their Children; and 'tis reaſonable, that their manner of Speech ſhould be ſuitable to their way of living, and that the one ſhould have no more of delicacy in it than the other; and if there be any thing in their Writings, which is not ſo agreeable to the niceneſs of latter Times, it is an argument of their Innocency and Purity, and of a native ſimplicity of Manners, void of Pride, and of Shame ariſing from Guilt.

In matters of Hiſtory, ſeveral things may be mentioned, not ſo much for their own ſake, as becauſe they were memorable in thoſe Times, and might help to keep up the Remembrance of other things more conſiderable. If *Moſes* has related, who *found the Mules in the Wilderneſs*, (for the original word is capable of a different ſignification.) [u] *Homer* has made the ſame Obſervation; thereby [x] intending, as it is ſuppoſed, to intimate the wickedneſs of the *Eneti*, by

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[r] Hermog. de Invent. lib. 4. c. 11.

[s] Vid. Athenæ, lib. 1. c. 4. cum Caſaub. Animad. De Antiquis illuſtriſſimus quiſque Paſtor erat, ut oſtendit Græca & Latina Lingua & veteres Poetæ. Varro de Re Ruſtic. lib. 2. c. 1.

[t] Herodot. 6. c. 137.

[u] Ἐξ Ἐνετῶν, ὅθεν ἡμιόνων γηθόσυνον ἀγέλη. Iliad. 2. v. 852.

[x] Διὸ καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἡμιόνων γένος ἐνεῦθεν πρῶτον ἐκφωνεῖται λέγει — τεκμήριον τοῦτο τῆς αὐτῆς πονηρίας καὶ μοχθηρίας δηλοῦς. Conſtantin. Porphyr. de Them. l. 1. c. 7.

whom

whom Mules firſt became known to the *Greeks*. The Characters and Speeches of Perſons in the Scriptures, are exceeding natural, and diſcover all the unaffected and inimitable Marks of Truth. They are ſhort, and contain ſuch circumſtances and thoughts as are not far fetch'd, but ariſe from the matter in hand, and have manifeſt influence upon the Actions themſelves. This may be ſeen in the Hiſtory of *Joſeph* and his Brethren, and in ſeveral other Paſſages, which are ſo naturally related, that in ſome of them, the manner of Relation, which manifeſtly ſpeaks the truth of what is delivered, has given occaſion to the cavils of ſuch as have not well conſidered it. *Saul* enquired of *Abner*, whoſe Son *David* was; *Abner* anſwered, he did not know; *David* was brought to *Saul*, who asked him the ſame Queſtion, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 55, 58. yet *Saul* had ſent to *Jeſſe*, for his Son *David* to play before him upon the Harp, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 19. *Grotius* imputes this forgetfulneſs to the Diſtemper which *Saul* then laboured under, and to the multiplicity of his Affairs. But was it ever expected of any King, that he ſhould remember the Names of the Fathers of all his Servants? *Jeſſe* was an obſcure Man, and *David* had not then been ſo much taken notice of, as that his Father's Name ſhould be known in *Saul*'s Court, and *Abner* being abſent with the Army, might never ſee *David* nor hear of him before. In the Relation of *Saul*'s Death, the Meſſenger who brought the News, had declared himſelf to be an *Amalekite*, yet *David* afterwards enquires of him, *whence art thou?* But nothing could be more natural than for a Man in that conſternation to ask that Queſtion ſo ſoon after, 2 *Sam.* i. 8, 13. And is there not the like Voice of Nature in theſe words of *Joſeph*, when he diſcover'd himſelf to his Brethren? *I am Joſeph: Doth my Father yet live?* Gen. xlv. 3. when they ſo little before had told him, that *Jacob* was ſtill living. Some have alledged, that they could conceive no reaſon for that Paſſage con-

cerning the Arrows which *Jonathan* was to ſhoot, to give *David* notice whether he were to go or ſtay, becauſe tho' he did ſhoot in that manner, which by agreement was to be a ſign to him that he muſt be gone, yet they met and diſcourſed together upon the place, after *Jonathan* had ſent his Servant away. But it ſeems they had a more favourable opportunity than they expected of converſing there: and tho' this happened beyond expectation, yet the Sacred Hiſtorian is ſo punctual as to acquaint us with that ſign which was given by an agreement made between *David* and *Jonathan*, when they ſuppoſed that it would not have been ſafe for them to come to one another, 1 *Sam.* xx.

There is no nicer Subject, than when a Man is forc'd to ſpeak of himſelf: Truth, if it be to his own praiſe, will be rejected as Falſhood, or at leaſt cenſured for Vanity; and if he blame himſelf, this will be ſuſpected as deſigned only to extort a Commendation from others. And yet there are certain times and occaſions, in which the wiſeſt and beſt Men have thought it requiſite to ſpeak with great freedom and openneſs of themſelves. There is a Deference owing to Authority, and a Reverence due to Years, and therefore ancient Men, and Men in Power, may ſpeak, as we ſay, *with Authority*; and any Man may ſpeak in his own vindication what would not become him in another caſe: Every Man has a right to defend his own Innocence by all lawful means, and to ſpeak Truth cannot be unlawful, tho' it be in his own commendation; nor can there be any indecency in it, when it is forced from him, for the good, not only of himſelf, but of others, who may ſuffer by the Scandal thrown upon him. All theſe circumſtances concurred in St. *Paul*'s caſe, who had the Authority of an Apoſtle, and the Reverence due *to Paul the Aged*, and the Intereſt of Souls to plead for what he yet terms *the folly* of commending himſelf in his own neceſſary Vindication. *Plutarch* in a ſet diſcourſe upon this

this Subject, determines, that a Man may praiſe himſelf, when it is neceſſary for his own defence, and when he may benefit others by it. [y] *Neſtor* ſpeaks of himſelf with as great commendation, as he could have ſpoken of any other Man; but when the Authority and Reverence due to his Age warranted that Freedom, and the neceſſity of Affairs required it of him, it was not only allowable, but very proper and requiſite. [z] *Tully* obſerves, that he might claim this privilege from his Old Age. [a] *Brutus* ſpeaks of himſelf in very high terms, and juſtifies his doing ſo. And *Socrates* himſelf, at his Tryal, ſpeaks very freely in his own commendation, which has never been mentioned to his diſpraiſe, but as an argument of his Courage and Innocence.

[b] *Virgil* makes *Æneas* and *Turnus* ſpeak of themſelves in ſuch a manner, as is hardly reconcileable to the Rules of Decency of our Times. Mr. *Dryden*, in his Tranſlation, ſaw it neceſſary to ſoften his Expreſſions, that they might be more ſuitable to our Cuſtoms and Manners. But certainly, if this were not agreeable to his own Age, it was at leaſt to that Notion which *Virgil* had of the Age in which *Æneas*

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[y] Hom. Il. x.

[z] Nihil neceſſe eſt mihi de meipſo dicere, quanquam eſt id quidem ſenile, ætatique noſtræ conceditur. Videtiſne ut apud Homerum ſepiſſime Neſtor de virtutibus ſuis prædicet? Tertiam enim jam ætatem hominum vixerat, nec erat ei verendum, ne vera de ſe prædicans nimis videretur aut inſolens aut loquax. Cic. de Senect.

[a] Juvat enim magnificè loqui, & certè decet adverſus ignorantes, quid pro quoque timendum, aut à quoque petendum ſit. Brut. ad Cic. Epiſt.

[b] Sum Pius Æneas ———
——— Fama ſuper æthera notus. —— Æn. I.
The Good Æneas I am call'd, a Name,
While Fortune favour'd, not unknown to Fame.
Turnus ego haud ulli veterum virtute ſecundus
Devoveo. —— Æn. II.
I Turnus, *not the leaſt of all my Name,*
Devote my Soul ———

lived, or elſe ſo great a Maſter of *Decorum* would never have put ſuch words into the mouth of his Hero. Yet theſe very words he had from [c] *Homer*, who makes them to be ſpoken by *Ulyſſes*. *Servius* ſays, Heroes were wont thus to ſpeak.

[d] Poets likewiſe aſſumed a liberty of ſpeaking bold Expreſſions concerning themſelves, upon pretence that they were acted by ſome Divine Power, and therefore were called Prophets; which is an argument that in the common Opinion of Men, inſpired Writers might uſe ſuch Forms of Speech as would not be proper nor decent for others to uſe. And this Liberty was taken by Orators as well as Poets, when the occaſion ſeemed to require it, as may be obſerved in [e] *Iſocrates*. For the ancient Orators too, by *Longinus*'s Obſervation, pretended to ſomething more than humane, and would be thought to ſpeak by ſome kind of impulſe; upon which account, this Liberty might be allowed them. The *Rant* of [f] *Arrian* can hardly be excuſed: for he ſpeaks of himſelf more like a Stoick, than like an Hiſtorian, or like a modeſt Man.

But it may well be thought needleſs for me to have uſed ſo many words on this Subject, when there is ſo little occaſion for any Objection of this nature in the Holy Scriptures, and where-ever there can be any pretence for it, it has been conſidered in its proper place: but I thought it might not be labour ill beſtowed, to ſhew here beſides, how bad Criticks they

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[c] Καὶ μοῦ κλέος ἠρανὸν ἵκῃ. Odyſſ. ix.

[d] Jamque opus exegi, quod nec Jovis ira nec ignis
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetuſtas.—Ovid. Metam. l. 15.
Exegi monumentum ære perennius. —Horat. carm. lib. 3. Od. 30.

[e] Panegr. & Panathen.

[f] Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο ἀναλεξάφω, ὅτι ἐμοὶ πάτεις τε, καὶ μήτηρ, καὶ ἀρχαὶ, οἵδε οἱ λόγοι εἰσί τε, καὶ ἀπὸ νέου ἔτι ἐγγύνονλο· καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἂν ἄκ ἀπαξιῶ, ἐμαυλὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, εἴπερ ἦν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις. Arr. de Expedit. Alexandr. l. 1.

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are that can object at this rate. I will ſay farther, that the Paſſage, *Tob.* v. 16. concerning the Dog which follow'd *Tobias* (which has given occaſion to unwary and unskilful Men to inſult with ſo much Scorn over a Book that is very uſeful, tho' not of Divine Inſpiration) is not only innocent, but agreeable to the beſt Patterns of Antiquity, [g] *Homer* and *Virgil*; who thought it a very proper and natural Ornament of their Poems to deſcribe Dogs following their Maſters; *Homer* ſpeaking of *Telemachus*, and *Virgil* of *Evander*. And * *Servius* produceth an Example of the ſame thing out of the *Roman* Hiſtory.

IV. As to the Method uſed in the Holy Scriptures, there is no reaſon to expect that Prophecies ſhould be written according to the Order of time in which they were deliver'd, or that Hiſtories ſhould be digeſted into Diaries or Annals, ſince there may be Reaſons, whether known or unknown to us, why they ſhould be otherwiſe plac'd: And thus the Lyrick Poets, [h] who pretended to Enthuſiaſm, and an Imitation, as it were, of Prophecy, do not confine themſelves to obſerve any Order of Time. Some things laſt foretold might be firſt to be fulfill'd; or ſome things were more or leſs remarkable, or concern'd the *Jews* more or leſs than others; but generally in the Prophetical Books of Scripture, what concerns the ſame Subject is put together, though foretold, or falling out, at different times, that the clearer and more diſtinct view may be had of it. This, as [i] St. *Jerom* obſerves, is the Cauſe of divers Tranſpoſitions in point of Time,

[g] Ἅμα τῷ γε δύω κυνες ἀργοὶ ἕποντο.
Odyſſ. ii. v. 11.
Nec non & gemini cuſtodes limine ab alto
Procedunt, greſſumque canes comitantur herilem.
Æneid. viii.

* Hoc & in Homero lectum eſt —— & in Hiſtoria Romana, quæ ait: Syphax inter duas canes ſtans Scipionem appellavit. Serv.

[h] Vid. Hieron. ad Hieremiæ cap. 21, 25.

[i] Hieron. ad Ezech. cap. 29, 30.

in the Prophecies of *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*; and [k] he takes notice, that *Daniel* having ſet down the Prophecies, which had relation to the ſeveral Reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belſhazzar*, *Darius*, or *Cyrus*, according to the Order of Time, afterwards declares the Revelations that were made to him, that had no Dependence upon the times in which they were made, but were written for the benefit of Poſterity. But the ſeveral Tranſpoſitions in the Scripture are ſufficiently accounted for by Commentators. And it muſt be obſerv'd, that the Sacred Writers mention no more of Civil Affairs, than was neceſſary to their purpoſe; and therefore in many things they refer to the Hiſtories then extant, for a fuller account of them: their Deſign was not to write a complete Hiſtory of all Events, but they confine themſelves to ſuch as were moſt fit for them to take notice of, and keep within the compaſs of their proper buſineſs.

It was expedient that the ſame Doctrines ſhould be repeated in divers places of Scripture, and interſperſed with other things, according to no certain Art or Method, becauſe this prevents their being corrupted or falſify'd, as they might have been, if they had been all reduced to ſeveral diſtinct Heads, and plac'd according to the Rules of Art. If one Prophet repeats what another Prophet had ſaid, this is to give it a new Confirmation, to revive the Remembrance, and ſhew the Certainty and Importance of it. It is ordinary in the beſt Authors not only to find the ſame things repeated in divers places of their Works, but to meet with them repeated in the very ſame Words: thus *Iſocrates*, *Xenophon* and *Demoſthenes* tranſcribe in one part of their Works what they have written in another; but none, I think, ſo frequently as *Demoſthenes*: though [l] *Ulpian* has obſerv'd, that this was an

[k] Hieron. ad Dan. c. 7. [l] Σωωθὲς γὰρ τοῦτο ποιεῖν τοῖς παλαιοῖς. Ulp. Enarr. Orat. Demoſthen. contr. Midiam.

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uſual thing with the Ancient Writers. *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus*, who was a skilful Critick, as well as an excellent Hiſtorian, begins ſeveral Books of his *Roman* Antiquities, in the ſame Words, with which he concluded the foregoing. It was cuſtomary likewiſe with the Philoſophers, παῤῥωδεῖν, or to allude to the Verſes of *Homer*, and to apply them with little variation upon all occaſions, as may be ſeen frequently in *Diogenes Laertius*.

All the Cavils therefore that are made againſt the Style of Scripture proceed from Ignorance of Antiquity, and from Raſhneſs in judging of Ancient times and Foreign Countries by our own. Whoever would either delight or profit, muſt ſpeak and act in ſome meaſure according to the Genius of the People with whom he converſes: and if we will but read the Scriptures, with the ſame Candor and Reſpect with which we read the Writings of Humane Authors, and conſider the Times, and Perſons, and the Occaſions upon which they were written, there is nothing that can ſeem harſh or improper either in the Words or Actions of the Perſons inſpired (for it was the manner of thoſe Countries to ſpeak by their Actions almoſt as much as in Words.) If we will but obſerve the Circumſtances in which the ſeveral parts of the Scriptures were written, we ſhall find cauſe to admire the Simplicity, and Plainneſs and Modeſty of the Style of the Scriptures.

In many Books of the Scriptures, the Style is ſublime and elegant, beyond any thing to be found in other Writings, and yet as natural as if it could not have been otherwiſe expreſs'd; and this is the true Excellency of Style, that it be plain and natural, and yet eloquent. *Longinus* gives a high Character of *Moſes*'s Style in a Book, the Deſign whereof is to repreſent the moſt perfect Idea of Eloquence: Indeed, ſuch is the Fitneſs both in Verſe and Proſe of the Words and Style of *Moſes*, ſo admirably ſuited to the Subject

upon all occaſions; as if he had been to preſcribe a Pattern of true Eloquence, as well as to enact Laws. *Paronomaſia*, which is a Figure of Speech frequently us'd by *Iſaiah*, and other Writers of the Old Teſtament, is an *Attick* Idiotiſm, and was very common in [m] the Ancient *Greek* Authors, from whom *Ennius*, *Plautus*, *Terence*, and other *Latin* Authors had it. *H. Stephens* has obſerv'd, that there is a great Reſemblance in *Herodotus* to the Style of the Scriptures. *Herodotus* had *Homer* in his view throughout his Hiſtory, and *Homer*'s Expreſſions are the ſame with thoſe us'd in the Scriptures, in many inſtances; as particularly, when he ſo often mentions the Children of the *Trojans*, and the Children of the *Greeks*, as the Scriptures mention *the children of Iſrael*; and other *Greek* Authors ſay, the Children of the Phyſicians, and the Children of the Philoſophers, as the Scriptures ſay, *the children of the bride-chamber*, and *the children of light*. [n] *Grotius* compares *Iſaiah* to *Demoſthenes*, a ſublime, but a moſt natural and judicious Writer: the ſame Author compares *Ezekiel* to *Homer* for the Beauty and Nobleneſs of his Style. [o] M[r] *Cowley* compares the Prophets, eſpecially *Iſaiah*, to *Pindar*: but of *Pindar* he ſays, that *if a man ſhould undertake to tranſlate him word for word, it would be thought that one Mad-man had tranſlated another*. For which he gives this Reaſon, that *we muſt conſider in* Pindar *the great difference of time betwixt his Age and ours, which thanges, as in Pictures, at leaſt the Colours of*

[m] Ἀντίθιον πόλεμον πολεμίζειν, Hom. Il. iii. v. 435. Ὄσσ' ἀσσοτέρω ἀγορήδον, Il. ii. v. 395.

Εὕρημα εὕρηκα, Herodot. l. vii. c. 10. Μεγέθη μέγας, & μέγιστος, Pauſan. paſſim. Πλήθη πολλοί, id. Achaic. p. 220. Ἴδων εἶδα, id. Corinth. p. 75. Bœot. p. 307. Μεγέθη μέγιστοι, Arr. Exped. Alex. l. 5. Πλήθη πλεῖστοι, id. Rer. Indic. lib.

Incœptum amentium, non amantium: vivere vitam: ſervire ſervitutem, &c. *apud Latinos*. Vid. Mer. Caſaub. de Ling. Heb.

[n] Grot. ad 4 Reg. xix. 2. & ad Ezech. initio.

[o] *Pref. to Pindarick Odes, and* Notes upon Pind. *Ode on Iſai.* xxxiv.

Poetry;

Poetry; the no less difference betwixt the Religions and Customs of our Countries, and a thousand Particularities of Places, Persons and Manners, which do but confusedly appear to our Eyes at so great a Distance; and lastly, we must consider that our Ears are Strangers to the Musick of his Numbers, which sometimes (especially in Songs and Odes) almost without any thing else, makes an excellent Poet. And of *David* he observes, that the best Translators have been *so far from doing Honour, or at least Justice to that Divine Poet, that methinks,* says he, *they revile him worse than* Shimei. And *Buchanan himself comes,* in his opinion, *no less short of* David, *than his Country does of* Judea. Yet *Isaiah* and the rest of the Prophets, and the *Psalms*, are translated into our Language word for word, as far as it is possible for one Language to be thus render'd into another: and notwithstanding all the Differences of Time, and Place, and Customs, and Persons, no sensible Man reads them in the *English* Tongue, but he must acknowledge that their Style, with all these Disadvantages, is truly great and excellent. Whereas [P] there are none of the Heathen Authors, that are so much esteem'd, which, if they were literally translated, as the Scriptures are, would bear the Reading, but they would appear ridiculous and impossible to be understood. For the Spirit, and Genius, and peculiar Idioms of most Tongues being so very different one from another, and depending upon the Customs and Humours of the People of several Countries, it was the evident Care and Providence of God, to cause great part of the Scriptures, though written by so many different Men, and at such distant times, and some Books of them in the earlier Ages of the World, to

[P] Quod si cui non videtur linguæ gratiam interpretatione mutari, Homerum ad verbum exprimat in Latinum. Plus aliquid dicam: eundem in suâ linguâ prosæ verbis interpretetur, videbit ordinem ridiculum, & Poetam eloquentissimum vix loquentem. Hieron. Præf. in Chron. Euseb.

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be penn'd in ſuch a Language and Style, as is moſt natural, and which, without any want of Art, exceeds the moſt artificial and ſtudy'd Eloquence in ſublime and noble Thoughts and Expreſſions, and in all the Beauties and Ornaments of Speech: and yet, which in all the neceſſary points of Salvation is eaſie to be underſtood, under all the Diſadvantages of a Verbal Tranſlation, by Men of ordinary Capacities, who live ſo many Ages after. The Prophecies of *Iſaiah* cannot be read, or heard, or thought of, without being mov'd by them: with what Life then, with what Zeal and Flame muſt they have been deliver'd? And what a mighty Bleſſing was ſuch a Prophet to his own Age, and to all ſucceeding Generations? Of Royal Blood, and of a Style and Behaviour ſuitable to his Birth; of Divine Virtues, and of Divine Eloquence! He declares things, which were not to be fulfill'd till many Ages afterwards, as plainly as if he had ſeen them before his Eyes, and would make all others to ſee them; he ſpeaks of Chriſt as clearly, as if with *Simeon* he had had his Saviour in his Arms, or with the Wiſe-men had been kneeling down before him, and preſenting him with more precious Gifts, than any they had to offer; and deſcribes his Paſſion as fully, as if he had follow'd him through every part of it, and having been crucify'd with him, had been juſt entring with him into Paradiſe. If this be thought a Digreſſion from my Subject, I hope it may eaſily be excuſed: for who can ſpeak of *Iſaiah*, without a Digreſſion, when Men chooſe the Food of Swine, and trample upon Pearls, as things of no value; as if he and the other Prophets had always the hard fate, to preach to *the Rulers of* Sodom, and *the People of* Gomorrha.

But if the Style of the Scriptures be not in all places alike excellent and exact, let it be conſider'd, that

1. The ſame Style is not ſuitable to all Subjects, and the Style and Dialect is different, according to the Diffe-

Difference of the Matter, or of the Perſons, for whoſe uſe it was immediately deſign'd. What concerns the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy in the Prophet *Daniel*, is in the *Chaldee* Tongue, and what relates directly to the *Jews* is in the *Hebrew*. Part of *Ezra* is in *Chaldee*, being a Relation of Matter of Fact contain'd in the *Chaldee* Chronicles; and *Jerem.* x. xi. is in the ſame Tongue, that the *Jews* might reject the Idolatry of the *Chaldeans* in their Language, and openly profeſs their own Abhorrence of it. And as upon theſe occaſions the Language of Scripture is chang'd, with reſpect to the Subject and the Perſons concern'd, ſo the Style muſt be ſometimes alter'd upon the ſame account.

2. Artificial Strains of Rhetorick, whereby the Paſſions are mov'd to the utmoſt Heighth, were very neceſſary to gain a preſent point, and carry a Cauſe by a violent and ſudden Tranſport, before Reaſon could interpoſe. But Religion being to be propounded upon reaſonable Motives, there could be no need of Rhetorick, when the Evidence of thoſe Miracles by which it was eſtabliſh'd, afforded ſo many other more certain and powerful means of Perſuaſion. The Scriptures are not written in the *enticing words of mans wiſdom*, but in Truth and Simplicity, and therefore might well have been without any Advantages of Eloquence, as needing no ſuch helps to recommend them to ſerious and impartial Minds: And tho' God has been pleas'd to condeſcend ſo far to the Infirmities of Men, as to convey very much of his Reveal'd Will to us, in ſuch a Style, as for its own ſake is highly to be eſteem'd and admir'd; yet it was fit that other parts of the Scriptures ſhould have the bare Force and Evidence of Truth only, to convince Men, that it might appear that our Religion was propagated not by any Arts of humane Eloquence, but by its own Worth and Excellency: For Eloquence was not uſed, where it would have been moſt neceſſary, if any humane means

means could be ſo, in aſſerting and propagating the Divine Truth. In the propagation of the Goſpel, all the Eloquence, as well as the Power, and Prejudices, and Vices of Mankind were combined againſt it, and yet leſs Elegancy and Accuracy of Style was employ'd by the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, than had been before uſed by *Moſes* and the Prophets, who yet had nothing which ſeem'd ſo ſtrange and wonderful to deliver. Which is one great Argument of the Power and Efficacy of the Goſpel, that it could prevail ſo much againſt all the Oppoſition in the World, only by telling a plain Truth, and in the plaineſt manner. For where the thing is evident, the feweſt and plaineſt Words are beſt, as in Mathematical Demonſtrations, it is enough if Men make themſelves to be underſtood: this likewiſe was all that the [q] Apoſtles aim'd at, their Cauſe and Doctrine was ſo certain and demonſtrable, that any Words, which did but fully and clearly expreſs their Meaning, were ſufficient for their purpoſe; their Rhetorick lay in the things themſelves, not in words: there is no great Art required to prove that to any Man, which he ſees with his Eyes; and therefore as the power of Miracles was greater under the Goſpel, than under the Law, ſo there was leſs need of Eloquence in the New Teſtament than in the Old. *Yet it cannot be deny'd*, as a [r] learned Critick has declar'd, *that St.* Paul, *in ſome kind, and upon ſome ſubjects, is as eloquent as ever Man was; not inferior to* Demoſthenes (in whoſe Writings he believes that Apoſtle had been much converſant) *or* Æſchines, *or any other anciently moſt admired.*

3. It is reaſonable to believe, that the Scriptures may be written in the Words and Phraſes of the Pen-

[q] Τῷ δ' γλῶτταν ἰδιωτίδους τῇ γε μὴ πρὸς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτοῖς δεδωρημένῃ θείᾳ, καὶ φιλοξόποις δυνάμει θαρσύνας, τὸ μὲν ἐν πειθοῖ καὶ τέχνῃ λόγων τὰ τῆς διδασκάλου μαθήματα προσθεῖεν ἢ τε ἤθεσαν, ἢ τε ἐνεχείρουν. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 24.

[r] Mer. Caſaub. *of Enthuſ.* c. 4.

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men of the ſeveral parts of them, and that the Holy Ghoſt might permit them to uſe their own Style, ſo directing them ſtill, and over-ruling them in every Word and Sentence, that it ſhould infallibly expreſs his own full Senſe and Meaning, and ſpeak the Truth which he inſpired. And therefore, tho' there be divers Styles in the Scriptures, yet this is no Prejudice to the Authority and Certainty of them. *Iſaiah*, for inſtance, being of the Blood-Royal, and educated at Court, may write in a more refin'd and lofty Style; and *Amos*, who was brought up *among the herdſmen of Tekoa*, may ſpeak in a more humble ſtrain, and fetch his Metaphors from lower and meaner things, and yet the Senſe and Subſtance of both may be from the Holy Ghoſt, and as exactly true and infallible, as if every Word and Syllable were dictated by him. But this has been already conſidered under its proper head.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures.

WHatever Uncertainty there can be ſuppos'd to be, concerning the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, or the Catalogue and Number of Books of Divine Revelation, this ought to be made no Objection againſt the Certainty of Divine Revelation it ſelf, or againſt the Authority of thoſe Books of Scripture, which are univerſally acknowledg'd and receiv'd by all Churches. For if this be a true way of arguing, then whatever we are ignorant of, muſt be an Argument againſt the Certainty of what we know; and by conſequence, no Man can be certain of any thing, ſince the wiſeſt Man is ignorant of ſo many things, that he knows very little in compariſon of what he is ignorant

ignorant of. And as to the matter in hand, there is ſcarce any Author of great Note and Fame, but Criticks have had Diſputes concerning the number of his genuine Works; and yet this has never been thought any prejudice to ſuch as are allowed by all to be genuine. Would not that Man make himſelf ridiculous, who ſhould reject the *Philippicks* of *Tully*, or *Virgil*'s *Æneis*, as ſpurious, becauſe other Books, either doubtful, or counterfeit, have paſs'd under the Names of theſe two Authors? If ſome Books have been diſputed, the reſt certainly are genuine beyond all diſpute, becauſe they have never been called into queſtion or doubt.

Now if theſe Books only were of Divine Revelation, concerning which there has never been any Diſpute, they contain all things neceſſary to be believed and practiſed; and as to the reſt, concerning which there has been any Controverſie, tho' they be exceeding uſeful to explain divers things, which we find in theſe, and perhaps to teach us ſome things (not eſſential to our Religion, nor neceſſary to Salvation) which are not to be found elſewhere: yet they are not abſolutely neceſſary to be received, becauſe whatever Doctrines are abſolutely neceſſary, they are to be found fully and plainly delivered in thoſe Books of Scripture, which have ever been received without contradiction or diſpute. Many Men were undoubtedly ſaved, before the writing of theſe controverted Books, nay, before the writing of any Books at all; Writings being no farther neceſſary, than as they are neceſſary to convey the knowledge of what is written, when the things now written could be as well known without writing, Books were not neceſſary: and tho' for after Ages it became neceſſary, that the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and Evangeliſts, ſhould conſign their Doctrine to writing, yet no more of their Writings can be abſolutely neceſſary to be known by us, than what may be ſufficient to inſtruct us in the ways

ways of Salvation. It is the infinite Goodneſs and Mercy of God to afford us more than is abſolutely neceſſary for our ſpiritual and eternal Life, as he has done for our natural, and it is a great ſin in any Man to reject any means of Salvation or Inſtruction, which God has been pleaſed to allow: but ſtill that Man would ſuſtain his natural Life and Health, who ſhould think all, that is not neceſſary to the ſupport of it, *common* or *unclean*, and not fit to be uſed for Food. And if a Man, without any of his own fault or neglect, ſhould come to the knowledge only of the uncontroverted Books, he would find them abundantly ſufficient to anſwer all the ends of Revelation, and to procure his Salvation. It cannot be denied, but that one infallible Authority is as great a Security, as never ſo many could be: but the ſame Doctrines are taught in ſeveral places of Scripture, and we ought to be thankful to God for it, that he has been pleaſed to furniſh us with ſo much more than is abſolutely neceſſary, and to repeat the ſame things in ſundry places, and in divers manners, for our farther inſtruction and confirmation in the Faith: tho' it would be abſurd and wicked to ſay, that he who believes all the Points of neceſſary Faith, upon the Authority of any one Book of Scripture, has no ſufficient means of Salvation, unleſs he likewiſe believe them upon the Authority of all the reſt.

Not that I ſuppoſe any wiſe and good Man can now find any cauſe to doubt of any Book in the Old or New Teſtament, whether it be genuine or no; but to ſuppoſe the moſt and the worſt that can be ſuppoſed, if thoſe Books, which at any time have been called in queſtion, were not only dubious, but certainly ſpurious, the remaining Books, which were never doubted of, are ſufficient for all the neceſſary ends and purpoſes of a Revelation: and therefore this ought to be no Objection againſt the Authority of the Scrip-

Scriptures, that the Authority of ſome Books has been formerly Matter of Controverſie.

I ſhall enter upon no Diſcourſe concerning the Apocryphal Books, the Authority whereof has been ſo often and ſo effectually diſproved by Proteſtants, that the moſt learned Papiſts have now little to ſay for them, but are forced only to fly to the Authority of their Church, which is in effect to beg the thing in queſtion, or to beg ſomething as hard to be granted, *viz.* the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*. But I ſhall here engage in no Controverſie of that nature. Both Proteſtants and Papiſts are, generally ſpeaking, agreed, that the Books of *Moſes*, and the Prophets in the Old Teſtament, and the Writings of the Evangeliſts and the Apoſtles in the New, are of Divine Authority; and if this be ſo, the Chriſtian Religion muſt be true, whether there be, or be not others of the ſame nature, and of equal Authority. Theſe Books, in the main, have already been proved to be genuine, and without any material corruption or alteration. I ſhall now only propoſe ſuch general Conſiderations, as may be ſufficient to obviate Objections.

The agreement between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* in the *Pentateuch*, is a clear evidence for its Authority. And tho' there were many and great Idolatries committed in the Kingdom of *Judah*, yet by the good Providence of God, there never was ſuch a total Apoſtacy in the People, nor ſo long a ſucceſſion of Idolatrous Kings, as that the Books, either of the Law or the Prophets, can be ſuppoſed to have been ſuppreſs'd or alter'd. *For three Years* under *Rehoboam*, *they walked in the way of David and Solomon*, 2 Chron. xi. 17. and tho' afterwards he *forſook the Law of the Lord, and all Iſrael with him*, yet both he, and the Princes, humbled themſelves at the Meſſage and Declaration of the Prophet *Shemaiah*, ch. xii. 6. and his Reign was in all but ſeventeen Years, *ch.* xii. 1, 13. *Abijam* was a wicked

wicked King, but he reigned no longer than three Years, 1 *Kings* xv. 2. *And tho' his Heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the Heart of David his Father*, ch. x. 3. yet both he, and his People, relyed upon *the Lord God of their Fathers*, and therefore gained a miraculous Victory over the *Iſraelites*, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 10, 12, 18. *Aſa* the third from *Solomon*, and *Jehoſhaphat* his Son, were great Reformers; and *Aſa* reigned one and forty Years, and *Jehoſhaphat* five and twenty Years, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 13. xx. 31. The two next Kings in ſucceſſion, did evil in the ſight of the Lord, but their Reigns were ſhort; *Jehoram* reigned eight Years, and *Ahaziah* but one, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 20. xxii. 2. During the interval of ſix Years under the uſurpation of *Athaliah*, the People could not be greatly corrupted: for ſhe was hateful to them, as *Jehoram* her Husband had been before her; and they readily joined with *Jehoiada* in ſlaying her, and in reſtoring the Worſhip of God, 2 *Chron.* xxii. *Joaſh*, the Son of *Ahazia*, *did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. We are ſure that he reigned well three and twenty Years, 2 *Kings* xii. 6. and probably much longer; for *Jehoiada* lived to a very great Age, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 15. *Amaziah* his Son, reigned twenty nine Years, and has the ſame Character, and with the ſame abatement, that *he did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart*, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. or *yet not like David his Father: he did according to all things, as Joaſh his Father did*, 2 Kings xiv. 3. *Uzziah*, Son to *Amaziah*, reigned fifty two Years, *and did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, according to all that his Father Amaziah did; and he ſought God in the days of Zachariah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 45. and after he was ſeized with the Leproſie for invading the Prieſt's Office, the Adminiſtration of Affairs was in the hands of his Son *Jotham*, ver. 21. who reigned ſixteen Years, and imitated the good part of his Father's Reign, *ch.* xxvii. 2.

Ahaz was wicked, and an Idolater, but he alſo reigned only ſixteen Years, *chap.* xxviii. 1. and his Son *Hezekiah* wrought a great Reformation, who reigned twenty nine Years, *chap.* xxix. 1. *Manaſſes* was much given to Idolatry in the former part of his Reign; but after his Captivity in *Babylon*, he was very zealous againſt it, *chap.* xxxiii. 15, 16. he was no more than twelve Years old when he began his Reign, *ver.* 1. and during his tender Years, he could not be the cauſe of great Corruptions; his Captivity was very ſhort; for he was ſoon brought again to his Kingdom upon his Repentance, *ver.* 11, 12. and he reigned fifty and five Years in *Jeruſalem*, ver. 1. having not been detained a[a] full Year in *Babylon*; but was carried into Captivity in the twenty ſecond Year of his Reign, and was a Penitent thirty three Years, as the *Rabbins* compute. *Amon* imitated the ill part of his Father's Reign, but his own continued no longer than two Years, *chap.* xxxiii. 21. The next was *Joſiah*, in whoſe time the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, which muſt be the Book of *Moſes*'s own hand-writing; for it is evident, that a Book of the Law could be no ſuch rare thing at that time in *Jeruſalem*, as to be taken ſo much notice of, unleſs it had been that Book, which was laid up in the ſide of the Ark, and was to be tranſcribed by every King. It ſeems, that Book of the Law had been purpoſely hid, to preſerve it from the attempts of Idolaters, who it was feared might have a deſign to deſtroy it: for if it had only lain by neglected, the finding of it could have been no ſuch ſurprizing thing, becauſe the place in the Temple was well known, where it was wont to be kept in the ſide of the Ark, and where they might have ſought for it: but it was probably at that time, ſuppoſed to have been utterly loſt; and its being found in the Ruines of the Temple, which was built for the ob-

[a] Uſſer. Annal. A. M. 3327.

ſervation

ſervation of it, and where it ought to have been kept with the greateſt care, as a moſt ineſtimable Treaſure; the veneration which *Joſiah* had for ſo ſacred a Writing, and the happy and unexpected recovery of it, when it had been diſregarded and almoſt loſt, through the Iniquity of his Predeceſſors; theſe Conſiderations could not but exceedingly move a Mind ſo tender and affectionately pious, as that King's, when he received the Law under *Moſes*'s own hand, ſent him, as he believed, by God himſelf, and delivered to him, as it were, anew from Heaven. But eleven Years, ſix Months, and ten Days after *Joſiah*'s Reign, *Jehoiachin* was carried captive to *Babylon*, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 2, 5, 9. till which time there were always Prophets, frequent Reformations, and never any ſucceſſion of Idolatrous Kings, which continued for a long time together; very few Kings were idolatrous throughout their whole Reigns, and thoſe that were, reigned but a ſhort time. Some manifeſt Judgment was conſtantly ſent, to prevent the evil Effects of a wicked Reign: as the *Jews* never were without Prophets, either before the Captivity, or under it, ſo *Iſaiah*, *Hoſea* and *Micah*, lived in the Times of the worſt of their Kings, *Ahaz* and *Manaſſes*; and they propheſied for very many Years, to oppoſe their Wickedneſs. *Iſaiah* was ſlain by *Manaſſes*, but his Prophecies were preſerved, as well as the Law, and the Writings of the reſt of the Prophets.

It has been [b] proved, that the *Pentateuch*, and the Books of the Prophets, written before the Captivity, were preſerved amongſt the *Jews* till their return; and it is acknowledg'd by thoſe who are of another opinion, that *Ezra*, who compoſed the Canon, did it by a Prophetick Spirit, or had the aſſiſtance of Prophets in the doing it. [c] *Joſephus* ſays, that their Books, after the time of *Artaxerxes*, are not of equal Autho-

[b] *Book* 1. *Part* 2. c. 6. *and* 9. [c] Joſeph. Cont. Apion. lib. 1.

rity with thoſe before his time, for want of a certain ſucceſſion of Prophets. And ſince the *Jews* admitted no Writings as inſpired, into the Canon after *Malachi*'s Prophecy, this ſhews their ſincerity and exactneſs in examining the Truth and Authority of ſuch Writings, as they admitted into their Canon of Scripture. The Phariſees *made the Commandment of God of no effect by their Traditions*, but never durſt preſume to impoſe them under the notion and character of a Book of the Scriptures. The modern *Jews*, in like manner, never dared to pretend to new Books of Revelation, but have conſtantly adhered to the old.

And what inducement could the *Jews* have to receive theſe Books into their Canon, of which it conſiſts, rather than the Apocryphal Books, but the evidence of their Divine Authority? which is a thing more eſpecially remarkable in ſome Books. Why ſhould they receive certain Books under the Names of *Solomon*, *Eſther*, *Daniel* and *Ezra*, but not admit into the Canon others going under the ſame Names, but becauſe of the difference in their Authority? The *Song of Solomon*, tho' it have not the Name either of *God* or of *Lord* in it, has ever been received for canonical, becauſe they were aſſured, that it was penned by *Solomon*, and that it is to be underſtood in a [d] myſtical ſenſe of the Meſſias and the Church. For in divers places, it can with no congruity be taken literally, as where the Eyes of the Spouſe are compared to the *Fiſh-pools of Heſhbon*, and her Noſe to the *Tower of Lebanon*, chap. vii. 4. And for Chriſt to be repreſented as an Husband to his Church, is no unuſual thing in other Books of Scripture. *So ſhall the King greatly deſire thy Beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him*, Pſal. xlv. 11. *For thy maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name: and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Iſrael, the God of the whole Earth,*

[d] Targum. in Cantic. iv. 5. vii. 3.

ſhall

ſhall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee, as a woman forſaken and grieved in ſpirit, and a wife of youth, when thou waſt refuſed, ſaith thy God, Iſa. liv. 5, 6. But the *Song of Solomon* being a continued Allegory of Chriſt and his Church, it is no more to be expected, that the Name of God ſhould be mention'd there, than in the Parables in the Goſpel. The Book of *Eſther* has likewiſe the ſame Objection to it, which may be as eaſily anſwer'd; for this containing an hiſtorical Narrative, nothing is related, but what was ſaid and done by *Eſther*, *Mordecai*, and other Perſons therein mention'd; and the Name of *God* or *Lord* having not been uſed by them in all that Buſineſs, it is no Prejudice, but a real Advantage and juſt Commendation of this Book, that the ſtrict and neceſſary Truth only is related, as it was in Fact, and as it ſtood recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings of *Media* and *Perſia*, (*chap.* ii. 23. x. 2.) For what was not contain'd in thoſe Records, was tranſacted between *Eſther* and *Mordecai* by *Hatach* one of the King's Chamberlains, and others that attended upon her, (*chap.* iv. 5, 12, 15.) And that high Veneration, which the *Jews* had for the [e] *Seven Names* of God, might be the Cauſe, that none of them were mention'd in a Meſſage with which Heathens were entruſted: for it was eſteem'd a Prophanation of any of theſe Names, when they were but written by a Gentile, or if a Book of the Law were found in his Poſſeſſion. The great Corruptions among the Jews, by their Converſation with the Gentiles, which *Nehemiah* reproves, might be the occaſion, why this Opinion and Practice then firſt prevail'd among ſome, at leaſt, of the devouter ſort: for we find *Nehemiah*, uſing the Name of God neither to *Artaxerxes*, (*chap.* ii. 3, 5, 7, 8.) nor to *Sanballat*, (*chap.* vi. 3, 8.) tho' the Name both of *God* and *Lord* being mention'd in the Decree of *Cyrus*, was from

[e] Maimon. de Fundament. Legis, c. 6. §. 2, 10. cum Vorſt. Not.

thence tranſmitted into all the ſubſequent publick Acts relating to the Building of the Temple, and could not be omitted by *Ezra*. But how it came to paſs, that the Name of God was not mention'd in ſuch an Exigence of Affairs is a Queſtion, which concerns not the Authority of the Book of *Eſther*, but the Diſpoſition and Demeanour of the Perſons ſpoken of in the Narrative. We find Expreſſions of Humiliation and Devotion, *Sackcloth* and *Aſhes*, and *Faſting* mention'd (*chap.* iv. 3, 16.) and the Faith of *Mordecai*, and his Dependence upon God, is declar'd *chap.* x. 13, 14. And whatever might be the occaſion, why in a caſe of ſo much Danger, the Name of God was not publickly uſed, a ſtrict adhering to Truth has been the cauſe of its Omiſſion, in a Book which relates Matter of Fact, as it was, with no ſuch Addition of Ornaments as to repreſent it better than it really was in it ſelf. The *Septuagint* in their Tranſlation have frequently inſerted the Name of *God* and *Lord*; ſo has *Joſephus* in his Hiſtory, and the Author of the Apocryphal Book of *Eſther*, with a Prayer of *Mordecai* and another of *Eſther*. But theſe Additions being found neither in the *Hebrew* nor the *Chaldee*, were never taken into the Canon. So ſtrict regard have the Jews always had to the Divine Authority of their Canon of Scripture, that no Objections, however obvious and plauſible, have mov'd them at any time to depart from it, or to make any Alteration in it. Why ſhould they receive the Books of thoſe whom their Fore-fathers had ſlain, and thoſe very Books for which they ſlew them, but upon the cleareſt evidence? It is certain they could be poſſeſs'd with no Prejudice in their Favour, but with very many againſt the Books of ſuch Authors. To give another inſtance: The Book of *Ruth* contains the Affairs and Tranſactions of a particular Family, of no great Conſequence, as one might imagine at firſt view, and yet it has been preſerv'd with as much Care, and as conſtantly receiv'd as the reſt. There is

little

little reaſon, upon humane Conſiderations, why a Relation concerning that Family ſhould be inſerted into the Canon of Scripture, rather than one concerning any other. But the Lineage of the Meſſias is ſet forth in it, and that was a ſufficient Reaſon why it ſhould be inſerted; and therefore by the divine Wiſdom and Providence, neither the Emulation and Envy of other Families, nor any other Cauſe or Accident, hinder'd its Reception and Preſervation amongſt the other inſpired Books. And in that Hiſtory, there is an account not very honourable for *David*'s Family, in deriving his Deſcent from *Phares* of *Thamar*, and ſhewing that his great Grandmother was a *Moabiteſs*; the *Moabites* being a People, who had an indelible Mark of Infamy fixt upon them by the Law of *Moſes*, Deut. xxiii. 3.

II. As the Pentateuch was ever acknowledg'd by the People of *Iſrael* after their Separation from the Tribe of *Judah*; ſo if they rejected the Writings of the Prophets, it muſt have been becauſe many of them were written by Prophets, who were of the two Tribes, and all the Prophets of *Iſrael* owning the Temple of *Jeruſalem* to be the true place of Worſhip, the *Iſraelites* and *Samaritans* muſt have great Prejudices againſt them upon that account, and the Prophetick Books likewiſe containing divers Prophecies againſt the Ten Tribes for their corrupt way of Worſhip, it cannot be expected, that they ſhould receive the Books of any of the Prophets in the ſame manner as they did thoſe of *Moſes*. The Books of *Samuel*, *David*, and *Solomon*, had leſs regard paid to them upon Reaſons of State by the Tribes, who follow'd the Revolt of *Jeroboam*: yet when [f] *Joſeph Scaliger* ſent to the *Samaritans* for the Canticles and the Book of Pſalms in their Language; as well as for the Book of the Law, and of *Joſhua*, they promis'd to ſend him

[f] Antiq. Orient. Eccl. Epiſt. 1.

them. And it is prov'd ſufficiently by Dr. [g] *Lightfoot*, that neither the *Samaritans*, nor the *Sadducees*, rejected the Books of the Old Teſtament, though they did not admit the reſt into the ſame Veneration and Authority with the Books of *Moſes*, nor read them in their Synagogues. This is alſo prov'd by F. *Simon* [h] both of the *Sadducees* and the *Karæi*, and [i] *Morinus* likewiſe proves it of the *Karæi*, who are generally taken for *Sadducees*. F. *Simon* maintains the contrary, and that they have wrong done them in being charg'd with the Opinions of the *Sadducees*: However, this is not material to our preſent purpoſe, ſince he ſhews that both the *Sadducees* and the *Karæi*, or *Caraites*, and all the *Jews* beſides receiv'd the entire Volume of the Scriptures *without any contradiction*. [k] *Hackſpan* likewiſe has ſhew'd that the *Sadducees* deny'd not the Authority of the Books of the Prophets.

III. Concerning the Books, whereof we find mention made in the Old Teſtament, either 1. They are not different from thoſe, which are now in the Canon, but the ſame Books under divers Names. Or 2. they were not written by Inſpiration, tho' written by Prophets. For we are not to ſuppoſe, that the Prophets were inſpired in every thing that they wrote, any more than in all they ſpoke. We read of *the ſtory of the Prophet Iddo*, and *the ſtory of the Book of the Kings*, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 22. xxiv. 27. that is, the Commentary, (as in the Margin) the *Midraſh*, *Inquiſitorium*, *Repertorium*. And the Book of *Jaſher*, or of the *Upright*, ſeems to have been a Commentary or Chronicle, which was continued down from Age to Age, at leaſt from *Joſhuah*'s time, to *David*'s. And this ſhews the Care and Integrity of the *Jews* in compiling their Canon, that they would not take into it all the Writings even

[g] Hebr. *and* Talmud. *Exercit. on* John iv. 25.
[h] Crit. Hiſt. V. T. lib. i. c. 16. & 29. Diſquiſit. Crit. c. 12.
[i] Epiſt. 70. inter Antiq. Eccl. Orient.
[k] Præfat. de Lipmanno.

of

of the Prophets themſelves, but only ſuch as they knew to be written by them, as Prophets, that is, by Inſpiration, the Prophets themſelves, no doubt, making a Diſtinction (as we find St. *Paul* did) between what they had written by the Spirit of God, and that in which they had not his immediate and extraordinary Direction, and infallible Aſſiſtance. Or 3. they might not be written by Prophets. For the Office of *Recorder*, or Remembrancer, or Writer of Chronicles (as it is explain'd in the Margin) is mention'd as an Office of great Honour and Truſt, and was diſtinct from that of the Prophets, 2 *Sam.* viii. 16. 2 *Kings* xviii. 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 8. *Iſaiah* xxxvi. 3, 22. Beſides the *Hebrews* call'd every ſmall Writing a Book: Thus the *Book of the Generations of Adam* is the Genealogy of the Patriarchs, *Gen.* v. 1. and the *Book of the Generations of Jeſus Chriſt*, Matt. i. 1. is his Genealogy. The ſame Word is tranſlated *a Regiſter of the Genealogy*, Nehem. vii. 5. and that which we render a Bill of Divorcement, *Deut.* xxiv. 1. is in the Original a Book of Divorcement, the Word being the ſame, which, *Joſh.* x. 13. and 2 *Sam.* i. 18. is tranſlated the Book of *Jaſher*. So *Matt.* xix. 7. and *Mark* x. 4. it is in the *Greek* a *Book* of Divorcement, the Word is the ſame which the *Septuagint* had uſed; it indeed may ſignify a little Book, but it often ſignifies a *Book*, without that diſtinction, and ſo it is render'd, 2 *Tim.* iv. 13. *David*'s Letter to *Joab* is a *Book* in the *Hebrew* and in the *Greek*, 2 Sam. xi. 14, 15. So is the King of *Syria*'s Letter to the King of *Iſrael*, 2 Kings v. 5. and there are many the like inſtances; and Letters are ſtyled Books by [1] *Herodotus* and other Authors. Or 4. tho' it ſhould be granted that ſome Books, which were written by Inſpiration, are now loſt, it is no Abſurdity to ſuppoſe that God ſhould

[1] Herod. lib. i. c. 124. & lib. vi. c. 4. Demoſth. Pauſan. Meſſen. Dion. Caſſ. l. 43.

ſuffer

ſuffer Writings to be loſt, through the Fault and Negligence of Men, which were dictated by his Spirit. Several things might by the Prophets be deliver'd by Revelation to the Perſons whom they concern'd, which were never committed to writing; and others, which were written, but which were not neceſſary to the ends of Revelation in general, but rather concern'd particular times and places, and the Subſtance whereof, as far as the World in general is concern'd, is to be found in the other Scriptures, might by the Careleſneſs of Men never come to the Sight and Knowledge of Poſterity.

And here I ſhall obſerve, that the Books of Prophecy have always the Names of the Authors expreſs'd, and commonly they are often repeated in the Books themſelves, but in the Hiſtorical Books there was not the ſame reaſon for it; becauſe in matters of Fact, which are paſt, an Author may eaſily be diſprov'd, if he relates what is falſe of his own times, or of times whereof there are Memorials ſtill extant. But the Credit of Prophecies concerning things to come, a long time after, to paſs, muſt depend upon the Miſſion and Authority of the Prophet only, and therefore it was neceſſary that the Names of the Prophets ſhould be annex'd, that their Predictions might be depended upon, when they were known to be deliver'd by Men, who by other Predictions already fulfill'd, had prov'd themſelves to be true Prophets.

IV. The very Preſervation of Books of ſo great Antiquity, through ſo many Changes and Revolutions, againſt all the Injuries of Time and Ignorance, againſt the Violence of War, and the Malice of Adverſaries, and ſo many other Accidents, which have deſtroy'd moſt other Books of any conſiderable Antiquity, is a certain Indication of a wonderful Providence concern'd for them, and of that Evidence whereby they were at firſt atteſted. The Laws of the wiſeſt Law-givers of the moſt flouriſhing and powerful Nations

Nations have been ſo little regarded by the People to whom they were given, that they ſoon forſook the Practice of them, and readily deliver'd up themſelves to be govern'd by other Laws, upon any Revolution; and all the Pretences to Revelation, which moſt of the Ancient Law-givers aſſum'd to themſelves, could make them no longer adher'd to, nor ſo much valu'd, as to outlive the Fate of the particular Kingdoms and States for which they were contriv'd: but moſt of them were changed or laid aſide before, and the reſt given up and abandon'd, as out of date, and of little uſe or eſteem afterwards, and all of them were ſo little able to withſtand the Deſtruction of time, that we know not much more of them, than that the beſt and moſt ancient were in great meaſure taken out of the Laws of *Moſes*. But the Books of *Moſes* and the Prophets have continued entire and unchang'd under all Accidents and Revolutions of Affairs, bearing this Character, as well as others, of him who is immutable. They have been ſtill aſſerted againſt all the Malice and Oppoſition of Enemies by a captiv'd and diſpers'd People, who by the ſignal Providence of God, though they reject their *Meſſias*, yet ſtill acknowledge thoſe Prophecies, which foretold his Coming; and after their Diſperſion for ſo many hundred years, are ſo far from renouncing them, that they aſſert and maintain them, and are zealous even to Superſtition, for thoſe Books, which command that Worſhip, and appoint thoſe Solemnities, which they have ſo long been out of all poſſibility to obſerve; as if thoſe Laws, which were once ſo uneaſy to their Fore-fathers, were now become natural to their Poſterity, or rather becauſe they were reveal'd by him, whoſe Word ſhall never paſs away till all be fulfill'd.

V. The New Teſtament gives Evidence and Confirmation to the Books of the Old, which are ſo often cited in it.

VI. The

VI. The Chriſtians were religiouſly cautious and circumſpect in admitting Books into the Canon of the New Teſtament. The [m] Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, and the Second Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, were at firſt ſcrupled only, or chiefly, upon the account of the Style; the Style of the former being thought different from that of St. *Paul*, and the Style of the latter from that of St. *Peter*. The Epiſtle of St. *Jude* was likewiſe doubted of for this reaſon, becauſe the Apocryphal Book of *Enoch* is cited in it. Writings, which went under the Names of ſeveral of the Apoſtles, were rejected, and by general Conſent laid aſide. The genuine Epiſtle of St. *Barnabas*, who is ſtyled an Apoſtle, *Acts* xiii. 2. xiv. 14. was never receiv'd but as Apocryphal; and the Firſt Epiſtle of St. *Clement*, of whom St. *Paul* gives as high a Character, *Phil.* iv. 3. as he doth of St. *Luke*, or as St. *Peter* ever gave of St. *Mark*, was never admitted among the Canonical Books, tho' it was wont to be read in Churches. But the Goſpel according to St. *Mark*, and the Goſpel and Acts of the Apoſtles written by St. *Luke*, have ever been receiv'd for Canonical. For which no Reaſon can be given, but that St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* were known to have written by Inſpiration, ſince upon all perſonal and humane accounts, an Epiſtle of St. *Barnabas* or St. *Clement*, muſt have carry'd as much Authority with it, as any thing under the Name of St. *Mark*, or St. *Luke*. If either in the Epiſtle of St. *Barnabas*, or St. *Clement*, it be ſuppoſed that the Reaſoning is not always juſt, but is ſometimes too allegorical, and ſometimes founded upon Miſtakes in Natural Philoſophy; yet it is certainly agreeable to the ways of Reaſoning, and the Philoſophy of that Age, ſo that nothing of this kind could then be any Hindrance or Prejudice to the Reception of theſe Epiſtles. [n] St. *Jerom*

[m] Hieron. Catal. Eccl. Script. [n] Unam ad ædificationem Eccleſiæ pertinentem Epiſtolam compoſuit, quæ inter Apocryphas ſcripturas legitur. Id. ib.

ſays,

ſays, that St. *Barnabas* was the Author of one Epiſtle written for the edification of the Church, which is read among the Apocryphal Books; ſo that Books were ſtyled *Apochryphal*, not becauſe it was uncertain who were the Authors of them, but becauſe it was doubtful whether they were written by inſpiration or no. So careful was the Primitive Church to receive none into the Canon, but Books certainly inſpired.

It is well obſerved by [o] F. *Simon*, to this purpoſe, *That if we compare the Goſpels and the other Books of the New Teſtament with the Liturgies, that we have under the Names of ſeveral Apoſtles, to whom the moſt part of the Eaſtern Chriſtians do attribute them, we ſhall be convinced that the Goſpels are truly the Apoſtles. For all the Churches have preſerved them in their Ancient Purity; whereas every particular Nation hath added to their Liturgies, and hath taken the liberty often to reviſe them. The reſpect that hath been always had to the Writings of the New Teſtament, without inſerting any conſiderable additions therein, is an evident proof that all people have looked upon them as Divine Books, which it is not lawful for any to alter. On the contrary, they have been perſuaded, that the Liturgies, tho' they bear the Names of the Apoſtles, or of ſome Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, were not originally written by them, to whom they were attributed. And therefore it hath been left free to the Churches to add to them, or to diminiſh from them, according as occaſion requires.*

VII. As the Primitive Chriſtians were very jealous and cautious in admitting Books into the Canon, ſo they had ſufficient means and opportunities to examine and diſtinguiſh the genuine and inſpired Writings from the Apocryphal or ſpurious. The way of Writing, and the Hands of the Apoſtles, were well known to thoſe to whom they wrote, as St. *Paul* intimates of his own hand and manner of Salutation:

[o] *Crit. Hiſt. of the N. Teſt. Part.* I. C. I.

for

for when he uſed an *Amanuenſis*, yet he wrote *the Salutation with his own Hand*, as his *token in every Epiſtle*, 2 Theſſ. iii. 17. They generally wrote to whole Churches, but particular Men are frequently named in their Epiſtles, which was a great means to aſcertain the Authority of them. [p] *Tertullian* appeals to Authentick Books, or the very Hand-writings of the Apoſtles themſelves. For tho' it be acknowledged, that the word [q] *Authenticus* doth not always denote the Original Writing under the Author's own Hand, but ſometimes only the Original Language; yet the words of *Tertullian* are expreſs, that the Original Epiſtles were in his time ſtill extant: for which Reaſon, he refers the Hereticks to the Apoſtolical Churches, where they were read, *viz.* to the Church of *Corinth*, of *Phillippi*, *Theſſalonica*, *Epheſus*, and *Rome*; but the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles were read in *Greek*, without doubt, in other Churches beſides theſe; and the reaſon why he refers them to the Apoſtolical Churches rather than to any other, muſt be, becauſe the Originals under St. *Paul*'s own Hand were there ſtill to be ſeen; and he mentions, that the Thrones or Seats of the Apoſtles were then alſo preſerved, as [r] *Euſebius* ſays, that of St. *James* was preſerved to his time. When [s] *Alypius*, in the Council of *Carthage*, *A. D.* CCCCXIX, moved, that the * *Authentick* Canons of the Council of *Nice*, which were ſaid to be kept at *Con-*

[p] Age jam, qui voles curioſitatem meliùs exercere in negotio ſalutis tuæ, percurre Eccleſias Apoſtolicas, apud quas ipſæ adhuc Cathedræ Apoſtolorum ſuis locis præſidentur, apud quas ipſæ Authenticæ Literæ eorum recitantur. Tertull. de Præſcript. c. 36.

[q] *Authentick* is oppoſed to *copy*, τὰ τέτων ἴσα, ἤτοι ῥήσεα, ἢ χὴ αὐθεντικὰ εἰς μέσον ἀσαγέτω Γεώργιος, &c. C. T. vi. Col. 963. Act. 14.

[r] Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. vii. c. 19.

[s] Cod. Canon. Eccl. Affric. p. 331. Juſtell. Edit. Fol. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 10.

* Τὰ αὐθεντικὰ, τέλεσι τὰ πρωτότυπα ἃ ἐν Νικαίᾳ Συνόδῳ. Mar. Epheſ. in Conc. Flor. Seſſ. 20. Col. 285.

ſtantinople,

ſtantinople, might be conſulted; he certainly meant the Canons, as they had been ſubſcribed by the Biſhops in that Council: for he propoſed, that Examination might be made, whether their own *Greek* Copies, or thoſe pretended by the Church of *Rome*, agreed with that Original. And was the diſtance of Time ſo much leſs between the Council of *Nice*, and that Council of *Carthage*, than it was between the Writing of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, and *Tertullian*'s Appeal to them? or, was there leſs care taken in preſerving his Epiſtles, than in preſerving the Canons of the Council of *Nice*, that *Tertullian* could not mean the ſame, that *Alypius* did by the word *Authentick?* It is ſaid, that *Pantænus*, contemporary with *Tertullian*, found the Goſpel of St. *Matthew* in the *Hebrew* Tongue among ſome *Chriſtians* in *India*, that had been left there by St. *Bartholomew*, which therefore was of equal Authority with an Original.

[t] *Juſtin Martyr* aſcribes the Goſpels to the Apoſtles; he tranſcribes the Chriſtian Doctrine at large out of them, and declares that they were read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies every *Sunday*. [u] St. *Irenæus*, a Diſciple of St. *Polycarp*, who was made Biſhop by St. *John*, gives a particular account of the Writings of the Four Evangeliſts, and ſays, there were Four Goſpels and no more, and that theſe were written by St. *Matthew*, and St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*, and St. *John*: [x] He likewiſe tranſcribes the moſt material Paſſages of the *Acts of the Apoſtles* at large. [y] *Tertullian* undertook the Defence of the Four Goſpels againſt *Marcion*. And theſe Fathers frequently quote theſe and the other Writings of the Apoſtles; ſo do likewiſe *Clemens Romanus* and *Ignatius*, who lived and converſed with the Apoſtles themſelves. But in our Diſputes with Infidels, particular regard is to be had to the Hiſtory

[t] Apol. 2. [u] Iren. lib. 3. c. 11. [x] ib. c. 12.
[y] Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. iv. c. 2, 5.

of

of the Goſpel; for our Proof againſt them depends upon Matter of Fact. Both [z] *Grotius* and F. *Simon* have proved, that the Goſpel written in *Hebrew* by St. *Matthew*, was preſerved to the time of St. *Jerom* and *Epiphanius*; and that tho' the *Nazarens* had made ſome Additions to it, yet they had made no Alterations in the Original Text. F. *Simon* moreover ſays, that the Goſpel of St. *Matthew* had been tranſlated undoubtedly out of *Hebrew* into *Greek*, before the *Nazarens* had inſerted their Additions; theſe being to be found in no *Greek* Copy. The *Ebionites* had corrupted the *Hebrew* Copy, which they uſed, and had left out what they pleaſed; but the Copy of the *Nazarens*, [a] *Epiphanius* ſays, was moſt entire, only he is not certain whether they retained the Genealogy of Chriſt; but it is moſt probable in F. *Simon*'s judgment, that they did retain it, tho' the *Ebionites* omitted it. So that tho' there were ſome Additions made by the *Nazarens*, yet as far as the proof of our Religion againſt Infidels is concerned, the *Hebrew* Goſpel, in its Original *Hebrew*, as it was written by St. *Matthew*, remained exactly perfect for divers Ages. Till the Sect of the *Nazarens* ceaſing, and the *Hebrew* Tongue growing out of uſe, the *Greek* Tranſlation only was preſerved. This Tranſlation of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel is aſcribed to one of the Apoſtles or Evangeliſts, tho' it be not certain to whom of them it belongs. [b] *Papias* ſpeaks of the Times before there was any Authentick Verſion, when he ſays, that every one tranſlated it, as he could, for his own uſe. It appears from him however, that there were *Greek*

[z] Grot. Mat. F. Sim. *Crit. Hiſt. on the N. Teſt.* c. 7. 8.

[a] Ἔχουσι δὲ τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον πληρέστατον Ἑβραϊστί. πάρ' αὐτοῖς γὰρ σαφῶς οὕτω καθὼς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐγράφη Ἑβραϊκοῖς γράμμασιν ἔτι σώζεται· εἰ μὴ οἶδα δὲ εἰ καὶ τὰς γενεαλογίας τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ ἄχρι Χριστοῦ ἀφεῖλον. Epiphan. Hæreſ. 29. Num. 9.

[b] Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. iii. c. 39.

Verſions

Versions of the Gospel of St. *Matthew* made immediately upon its first publication, and from hence we may be assured, that St. *John* revised and approved the present Version (which is by some attributed to him) by whomsoever it was made at first. For this Gospel in the *Greek* Tongue being most in use, and thereby preserved, when the Original *Hebrew* has been so long ago lost, it is not to be supposed that St. *John* should have no regard to it in that Review which he took of the other Gospels, that were written originally in *Greek*. We read in [c] *Photius*, that he revised the Gospels which were brought to him written in divers Languages, the Versions as well as the Originals, and therefore this of St. *Matthew*'s Gospel cannot be supposed to have been omitted.

One of the Miraculous Gifts was that of *Discerning of Spirits*, whereby Persons endued with it were enabled to distinguish true Revelations from Impostures, 1 *Cor.* xii. 10. And St. *John* wrote his Gospel and his Epistles to confute those Hereticks, who were the chief Forgers of counterfeit Books of Scripture, or the most notorious corrupters of the true Books: and his Life was, by the Providence of God, prolonged, that he might be able both to vindicate and perfect the Canon of Scripture. We find that [d] he discovered an Imposture, which was framed concerning St. *Paul*, and [e] that he read and approved the Gospels which had been written before his own; and there is no reason to doubt, but he had seen all the other Writings of the New Testament, and so finished the Canon of Scripture himself. And the Scriptures of the New

[c] Phot. Cod. cclix.

[d] Hier. Catal. in St. Luc.

[e] Τῶν παραναφερέντων τεσσάρων εὐαγγελίων εἰς πάντας ἤδη, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν διαδεδομένων, ἀποδέξασθαι μὲ φασὶν, ἀληθείαν αὐτοῖς ἐπιμαρτυρήσαντα. Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 24. —— quod quum legisset Matthæi, Marci, & Lucæ volumina, probaverit quidem Textum Historiæ, & vera eos dixisse firmaverit. Hieron. Catal. in St. Joan.

Testament were read in the Churches and Assemblies of Christians from the beginning, as those of the Old Testament had been in the Synagogues of the *Jews*, by which means they became so divulged and published, that they could be neither lost nor falsified.

VIII. The Books of the New Testament were acknowledged to be genuine by the Adversaries of the Christian Religion. To say nothing of St. *Paul's* Epistles, which he frequently quotes, the Gospels were allowed by [f] *Julian* the Apostate to belong to the Authors, whose Names they bear. [g] *Trypho* owns he had read the Gospels, and makes no question or scruple about the Authors. *Celsus* quotes the Scriptures frequently, and *Hierocles* (as [h] *Lactantius*, who had heard him discourse, says) was as conversant in them, as if he had once been a Christian, yet neither of them moved any dispute, concerning the Authors of the Books of the Scriptures; but in referring to them upon all occasions, shewed that they had nothing to object on that Head. And when [i] *Celsus* says, that some of the Christians made alterations in the Gospels, this is a confession that some only did it; and *Origen* shews, that they were Hereticks, *viz.* the *Marcionists* and *Valentinians*, and perhaps the Disciples of *Lucanus* or *Lucianus*, for in this he could not be positive, tho' this *Lucanus* was a follower of *Marcion*. But when *Celsus* made that Objection, he would certainly have alledged, that they were ascribed to wrong Authors, if he could have found any colour for such a pretence.

IX. There are still extant Copies of great Antiquity. The *Cambridge* Copy in *Greek* and *Latin*, containing the Four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles; and that which is supposed to be the second part of it, containing St. *Paul's* Epistles, in the

[f] Cyrill. Alex. contr. Jul. lib. x. [g] Just. Mart. Dial.
[h] Lactant. Institut. lib. v. c. 2, 3. [i] Orig. cont. Cels. lib. 2.

French King's Library; and another the like Copy, which is in the Library of the *Benedictines* of [k] St. *Germains*, are concluded to be a thouſand Years old at leaſt: *Morinus* thought them to be ancienter than St. *Jerom*'s time. The *Alexandrian* Copy is believed to have been written by *Thecla*, above one thouſand three hundred Years ago. [l] *Morinus* acknowledgeth it to be of above twelve hundred Years date. [m] Biſhop *Walton* ſuppoſes the *Alexandrian* MS. to be at leaſt as old as that in the *Vatican*, which is allowed to be twelve hundred Years old. There is [n] one *Syriack* MS. of the Goſpels in the Library of the Duke of *Florence*, of above a thouſand Years Antiquity, and another not much leſs ancient. A [o] *Gothick* Tranſlation of the Four Evangeliſts formerly belonging to the Abbey of *Werdin*, is likewiſe of above a thouſand Years Antiquity. To omit the ancient *Latin* MS. both in [p] our own, and in other Countries, [q] *Maſius* had a *Syriack* MS. of the Bible written above a thouſand Years before; and [r] *Morinus* mentions a *Coptick* MS. of the Four Evangeliſts, in the Library of the Oratorians at *Paris*, which has no diſtinction of Verſes or Words, which is a certain ſign of great Antiquity. And what ancient Books are there, of which the Originals are ſtill extant? or of which there are ſo ancient Copies, as of the Scriptures?

X. Sufficient Reaſons may be given, to ſhew how it came to paſs, that the Authority of ſome Books was at firſt doubted of.

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[k] F. Simon *Crit. Hiſt. of the N. Teſt. Part* 1. *c.* 31. Mabil. de Re Diplom. lib. 5. Tabell. 1.

[l] Epiſt. 54. inter Antiqu. Eccl. Orient. [m] Prolegom. ix. 34.

[n] F. Simon *Crit. Hiſt. of the N. Teſt. Part* 2. *c.* 14.

[o] Gruter. Inſcrip. p. 146.

[p] Vid. Mabill. Iter. Italic. & Uſſer. de Symb.

[q] Maſ. Præf. in Joſua.

[r] Morin. Exercit. Bibl. lib. 1. Exercit. 6. c. 22.

1. The Epistle to the *Hebrews* had no Name prefix'd, (either because the *Jews* were prejudiced against St. *Paul*, or because the *Gentiles* were his more peculiar care, or for some other reason unknown) and in this it differs from the rest of St. *Paul*'s Epistles, and the [s] Style is different, which occasioned the first doubts about it (as it happen'd likewise to St. *Peter*'s second Epistle, upon the account of its Style) and then the *Novatians* alledging some Texts in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* in favour of their Opinion, this made the Orthodox the less inclined to receive a Book, which before had been disputed; and therefore, tho' it was received in the East, it was questioned at *Rome*, where *Novatian* began his Schism; whereas it had been received at first by the Church of *Rome*: for [t] *Clemens Romanus*, in his First Epistle written in the Name of that Church to the Church of *Corinth*, makes great use of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and sometimes cites its very words; from whence *Eusebius* concludes, that St. *Paul* was the Author of it. The Second Epistle of St. *Peter* might be scrupled on the same account, and both that and the *Revelation* of St. *John* being alledged for the *Millennium*, by such as understood it in a gross Sense; this caused the Authority of those Books to be called in question, which is said [u] expressly of the *Revelation*.

2. Some Epistles were written to particular Persons, or directed to such as lived at a great distance; and by reason of Persecutions arising, the Authentick Epistles might not readily be produced. The Epistle of St. *Paul* to *Philemon*, and the Second and Third Epistles of St. *John*, being short, and written upon particular Occasions, contain little, which was needful to be cited in the Controversies of the First Ages, and they were therefore the seldomer cited. Besides, these Two Epistles

[s] Hieron. Catal. Petr. & Paul. [t] Eusеb. Hist. lib. 3. c. 23.
[u] Eusеb. Hist. lib. 6. c. 25.

of St. *John* and his *Revelation*, with the Epistle of St. *Jude*, and the Second Epistle of St. *Peter*, were omitted in the ancient *Syriack* Version, which probably was made before these Books of Scripture were publish'd. And the Authority of that Version might occasion the Caution afterwards us'd in the reception of them. S. *John*'s Gospel was indeed last written: but this was to supply what had been omitted by the other Evangelists, and [x] contain'd what he had preach'd for many years, not only at *Ephesus*, but in the neighbouring Provinces of *Asia*, which upon occasion, he was wont to visit; and therefore his Gospel was immediately dispers'd and known all over the World, and by the Churches of *Syria*, as well as by others, who before had been acquainted with the Substance of it: But there were not the same Reasons for so speedy a Publication of his *Revelation*, or of his Second and Third Epistles, and those of St. *Peter* and St. *Jude*.

3. Some Books were not usually read in the Churches, as the rest were. All the Books of Scripture, except the *Revelation* of St. *John*, are inserted in the Catalogue of the Council of *Laodicea*, and this was omitted, because by reason of the abstruse Mysteries contain'd in it, it was not publickly read in Churches: for that Catalogue was design'd to shew what Books ought to be read in the publick Assemblies.

4. The Hereticks would use all their Endeavours and Subtilty to hinder the Reception of those Books, by which their Heresies were disprov'd, and they might so far have effect, as to make some to doubt for a while of their Authority. For instance, *Diotrephes*, an ambitious aspiring Man, who prated *against S.* John *with malicious words*, and had so much power, as to *cast the Brethren out of the Church*, would forbid the receiving of St. *John*'s Epistles, as well as the receiving the Brethren of that Apostles Communion; and that

[x] Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 23, 24.

he did this, St. *John* himſelf intimates, when he ſays, *I wrote unto the Church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not*, Joh. Epiſt. iii. 9. that is, he receiv'd not St. *John*'s Epiſtle, for that would have been to receive him as an Apoſtle, or to acknowledge his Authority. [y] *Cerinthus* feign'd a Book of *Revelations* in imitation of St. *John*, or rather in oppoſition to him, thereby to hinder, as far as he was able, the Benefit, which the Church was to receive from St. *John*'s *Revelation*, who ſolemnly declar'd *Cerinthus* to be the Enemy of Truth, and *Caius* the *Roman* Presbyter, upon the account of his Book of *Revelations*, ſtyled him the Enemy of the Scriptures.

XI. Nevertheleſs, there is no Book of the New Teſtament, which by theſe, or any other means, hath been call'd in queſtion, but it has ſufficient Teſtimony from Antiquity. The Epiſtles of St. *Paul* to *Philemon* and to the *Hebrews*, and that of St. *James*, were in the Ancient *Syriack* Verſion; which proves that thoſe Churches ever receiv'd them. The Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, as I have already obſerv'd, is cited by *Clemens Romanus* in his firſt Epiſtle, which was it ſelf of ſuch Authority, that it was wont to be read in Churches: from whence [z] *Euſebius* had great reaſon to aſcribe it to St. *Paul*. And this Epiſtle of *Clemens* was written by him, to the Church of *Corinth*, in the Name of the Church of *Rome*; which ſhews that both the Church of *Rome*, and the Church of *Corinth*, at that time receiv'd the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* as Canonical; tho' afterwards ſome, ſays [a] *Euſebius*, rejected this Epiſtle, alledging that it was by the *Roman* Church deny'd to be St. *Paul*'s. But it is aſcrib'd to St. *Paul* by the Orthodox Biſhops of the [b] firſt Council of *Antioch*,

[y] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 28. Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 3.
[z] Hiſt. l. iii. c. 38. [a] Lib. iii. c. 2.
[b] Concil. Labb. Tom. 1. col. 844.

in

in their Epistle to *Paulus Samosatenus*; by [c] *Clemens Alexandrinus*, by [d] *Origen*, who [e] says, that the Ancients, before him, did not, without good Grounds, acknowledge it to be that *Apostles*; by the whole Church of *Alexandria*; for *Alexander*, Bishop of that See, in his [f] two Epistles against *Arius*, alledges the Authority of St. *Paul* in this to the *Hebrews*; and the latter of his Epistles was [g] subscrib'd by his Clergy. And the Words of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* were, by the Fathers of the Council, produc'd against the *Arian* Heresy, according to the History of it by *Gelasius Cyzicenus*. [h] St. *Jerom* declares, that he receiv'd the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, upon the Authority of the Primitive Writers, who cited it as Canonical. [i] *Theodoret* says, that the Church ever receiv'd it, and that *Eusebius*, with all the Ancients, from the beginning acknowledg'd it to be St. *Paul*'s. The Epistle of St. *James* is cited by *Clemens Romanus* in both his Epistles, as is also the Second Epistle of St. *Peter*; not *verbatim* indeed, but in such a manner, as the Old Testament is cited in the New, and according to the Custom of Ancient Writers. In his second Epistle, they are cited under the Title of a Prophecy, because both these Apostles foretel what would befal those, who did not live as he there exhorts to do. The Epistle of St. *Jude* is ascribed to him by [k] *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who likewise says, that he had prophetically spoke of the Heresies that sprung up. [l] *Tertullian* was so far from rejecting St. *Jude*'s Epistle, that upon the Authority of it he argued, that the Prophecy of *Enoch* must be genuine. [m] The second Epistle of St. *John* is ascribed to him by *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*. Neither his second nor third Epistles were deny'd to

[c] Strom. 2, 4, 6. [d] In Joan. Tom. 2. [e] Apud Euseb. l. vi. c. 25. [f] Socrat. l. i. c. 6. Theodoret. l. i. c. 5. [g] Gelas. Cyzic. Hist. Conc. Nicen. l. ii. c. 3. & 23. [h] Ad Dardan. [i] Hypoth. in Epist. ad Hebr. [k] Pædag. l. iii. c. 8. Strom. 3. [l] De cultu Fœm. l. i. c. 3. [m] Iren. l. i. c. 13. §. 2. Tertull. Præscr. c. 33.

be his, nor had any Objection made to them by [n] *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria*. And the ſecond was aſcrib'd to him in the Council of [o] *Carthage*, under St. *Cyprian*. The *Revelation* of St. *John* was own'd to be genuine by [p] *Juſtin Martyr*, by [q] *Irenæus*, and by [r] *Tertullian*, and it is frequently cited by St. *Cyprian*. Both [s] *Juſtin Martyr* and *Irenæus* wrote a Commentary upon the *Revelation* of St. *John*. [t] *Dionyſius*, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, did not deny the Divine Authority of it, though from the Unlikeneſs of Style, and other Differences, which he obſerv'd between the *Revelation* and his Goſpel and Epiſtles, he believ'd another of that Name, and not St. *John* the *Evangeliſt*, to be the Author of it. [u] St. *Jerom* declares of the *Revelation* of St. *John*, as he does of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, that he receiv'd it upon the Authority of the Ancients. The [x] Council of *Laodicea*, *A. D.* CCCLXIV. omits no Book of the New Teſtament, but the *Revelation*, which is not inſerted in the Catalogue of that Council, for the reaſon abovemention'd. The Council of [y] *Carthage*, held *A. D.* CCCCXIX. ſets down the complete Canon of Scripture, aſcribing (as the Council of *Laodicea* had done) fourteen Epiſtles to St. *Paul*, and aſcribing, beſides, the *Revelation* to St. *John* the Apoſtle. And both theſe Councils were [z] receiv'd into the Code of the Eaſtern Church. * The Second of St. *Peter*, and the Epiſtle of † St. *James* are cited by *Irenæus*.

XII. Though the Authority of ſome Books hath been queſtion'd by private Men, yet thoſe Books were never rejected by any Council of the Church, though frequent Councils were call'd in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, and had this very thing under Con-

[n] Apud Euſeb. l. vii. c. 25. [o] Cypr. Op. Edit. Oxon. p. 242. [p] Dialog. [q] Lib. iv. c. 37, 50. l. v. c. 26. [r] Præſcript. c. 33. de Reſurrect. Carnis, c. 27. adv. Prax. c. 17. adv. Marc. l. iii. c. 14. [s] Hier. Catal. in Johan. [t] Euſeb. ib. [u] Epiſt. ad Dardan. [x] Can. 59. [y] Can. 24. [z] Synod. Quiniſext. can. 2. * L. v. c. 23, 28. † L. iv. c. 30.

ſideration.

ſideration. * *Tertullian*, after he had turn'd *Montaniſt*, rejecting the Authority of *Hermas*'s *Paſtor*, as not being receiv'd into the Canon of Scripture, ſays, that it was reckon'd amongſt the Apocryphal Books, by all the Councils of his Adverſaries, the Orthodox. From whence it is evident, that in *Tertullian*'s time, divers Councils had paſt their Cenſure upon the Apocryphal Books, and that the Canon of Scripture had been fixt long before. So that the time, in which ſome of theſe Councils were held, muſt probably be, whilſt St. *Polycarp*, a Diſciple of St. *John*, was yet living, whoſe Martyrdom, by the earlieſt Computation, was not till *A. D.* CXLVII. at leaſt they muſt be held in *Irenæus*'s Life-time, who convers'd with St. *Polycarp*, and liv'd at the ſame time with *Tertullian*, and † makes expreſs Diſtinction between Genuine and Apocryphal Books. Thus was the Canon of Scripture vouch'd by thoſe, who had receiv'd it from St. *John*, and Councils upon occaſion were call'd (which ‖ *Tertullian* elſewhere mentions as very numerous and frequent in *Greece*) to give Teſtimony to the Genuine Canon, and cenſure Apocryphal Books.

It is manifeſt, that the Canon of Scripture was ſettled before the Council of *Laodicea*, which in the Fifty ninth Canon appoints that no Books, [a] which are *extra Canonem*, but only Canonical Books ſhould be

* — Sed cederem tibi, ſi Scriptura Paſtoris, quæ ſola mœchos amat, divino inſtrumento meruiſſet incidi; ſi non ab omni Concilio Eccleſiarum etiam veſtrarum inter Apocrypha & falſa judicaretur. Tertull. de Pudicit. c. 10.

† Iren. l. i. c. 1. §. 15. Ib. c. 17.

‖ Aguntur præcepta per Græcias illas certis in locis Concilia ex univerſis Eccleſiis, per quæ & altiora quæque in commune tractantur, & ipſa repræſentatio totius nominis Chriſtiani magna veneratione celebratur. Et hoc quidem dignum fide auſpicante congregari undique ad Chriſtum. Tertull. de Jejun. c. 13.

[a] Οὐ δεῖ ἰδιωτικὰς ψαλμοὺς λέγεσθαι, ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, οὐδὲ ἀκανόνιστα βιβλία, ἀλλὰ μόνα τὰ κανονικὰ τῆς παλαιᾶς καὶ καινῆς διαθήκης. Conc. Laod. can. lix.

read

read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and then ſubjoins the Titles of the *Canonical* Books, which Denomination they had, as *Zonaras* and *Balſamon* obſerve, becauſe they were inſerted into the Apoſtles Canons, and all others were ſtyl'd *Uncanonical*. And it is concluded, after the ſtricteſt Examination, by the beſt Criticks, that thoſe which go under the Name of the Apoſtles Canons, are the Canons of Councils aſſembled before the Council of *Nice*, inaſmuch as they are referr'd to by that Council; and that they are ſtyled *Apoſtolical*, becauſe they were made by Apoſtolical Men, or ſuch as liv'd next to the Apoſtles times, and deliver'd in theſe Canons what they had receiv'd from the Apoſtles. Dr. *Beverege* thinks they [b] were collected into one Body by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and Dr. *Cave* ſeems inclin'd to be of the ſame Judgment. As to the Authority of the particular Apoſtolical Canon, which contains the Canon of Scripture, the Council of *Laodicea* gives a ſufficient Teſtimony to it, ſo far as it concerns the Books of the New Teſtament; and ſhews wherein it has been corrupted ſince. All which very well agrees with that which I obſerv'd from *Tertullian*, that frequent Councils were call'd in the firſt Ages, and that they had the Canon of Scripture among other things under conſideration, which we find ſet down in the laſt of the Apoſtles Canons, and from thence, in the Canons of the Council of *Laodicea*; no Book being omitted but the *Revelation* of St. *John*, which yet had been acknowledg'd and receiv'd as Authentick, from the beginning, by thoſe who had moſt reaſon to know of what Authority it was; but none were inſerted into the Canon, but ſuch Books as were appointed to be conſtantly read in the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians.

[b] Bever. Annot. ad Pandect. Can. & Cod. Can. Eccl. Primit. vind. Cave Hiſtor. Liter. in Clem. Roman.

It

It appears then, that the Canon of Scripture was finiſh'd by St. *John*, and that ſuch Books as were not of Divine Authority were rejected, by Councils held, when there were living Witneſſes to certify St. *John*'s Approbation of the Canon, or at leaſt thoſe, who had receiv'd it from ſuch Witneſſes; the Goſpels of the other Evangeliſts were tranſlated into divers Languages in St. *John*'s Life-time, and we muſt in reaſon ſuppoſe the ſame of the other Books of Scripture; this is certain, that they were all very early tranſlated into many Tongues, and diſpers'd into ſo many Hands, in ſo many Countries, that it was impoſſible they ſhould be either loſt or falſify'd, eſpecially ſince the ſeveral Sects of Chriſtians were never more jealous and watchful over each other in any thing, than in this Particular, the different Intereſts and Pretenſions of all Parties being chiefly concern'd in it, and no Catalogue of Books could have been receiv'd excluſively to all others, but upon the cleareſt Evidence.

XIII. When it once appear'd, that the Books, which had been doubted of, belong'd to the Canon of Scripture, they were afterwards generally acknowledg'd, and conſtantly receiv'd in all Churches: Every Sect has ſince us'd all Arts and Endeavours to reconcile the Scriptures to their own Doctrines; few or none preſuming to reject the Authority of any of theſe Books, which they would never ſcruple to do, if they ſuppos'd they could make out any plauſible Pretence for it. Proteſtants have refus'd to admit of the Apocryphal Books, as inſpir'd; but whoever have gone about to reject any part of the Canonical Scriptures, have been univerſally declar'd againſt for it: whereof no other Reaſon can be given, but the Evidence, that is for the Authority of the Canonical Books of Scripture, which is wanting for the Authority of the Apocryphal Books. Papiſts own the Authority of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, and of the fourteenth Chapter of that Epiſtle, which is directly

rectly againſt praying in an unknown Tongue; and they acknowledge the Epiſtle to the *Galatians* to be genuine, tho' the ſecond Chapter be ſo clearly againſt the Pretenſions of the Church of *Rome*. Theſe Epiſtles indeed were never controverted: but the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* likewiſe is not rejected by the *Socinians*, tho' the Divine Nature of Chriſt, and the Merit and Satisfaction of his Sufferings, are ſo plainly aſſerted in it; and they dare not deny the Authority of the Goſpel and Epiſtles of St. *John*, though they are ſo hard put to it, to expound them to their own Senſe, that *Socinus* was forc'd to pretend to I know not what Revelation, to help out one of his Explications, which he would not have done, if he could have found out any colour for not admitting the Authority of a Text ſo directly contrary to his own Tenents, that he could not expect, that any thing leſs than a Revelation ſhould procure any Credit to his Interpretation. And generally the Caſe is the ſame with other Sects: thoſe that differ never ſo much one from another in the Interpretation of particular Texts, yet agree in the Acknowledgment of the Authority of the Canon of Scripture it ſelf, or can find out no ſufficient Pretence to diſown it.

But becauſe the Account I have here given of the Canon of Scripture, is thought new and liable to Exceptions; I ſhall, in Defence and Explication of it, prove theſe Four things, which will take in all, that is material, which has been objected againſt it.

I. That by the *Canon* of Scripture is to be underſtood, a ſet Number or Catalogue of Books of Scripture. II. That there is ſufficient Evidence to believe, that St. *John* did both perfect and ſettle the Canon of Scripture. III. That tho' the Councils mention'd by *Tertullian*, as having confirm'd and atteſted the Canon of Scripture, be omitted by other Authors, yet this is no Proof, that the Canon of Scripture was not confirm'd and atteſted by ſuch Councils. IV. That tho' uncano-

uncanonical Books were read in Churches, and the Authority of ſome Books, which had been received into the Canon, was afterwards diſputed; this doth not prove, that theſe Books were not inſerted by St. *John* into the Canon, which was confirmed and atteſted by thoſe Councils as fix'd and eſtabliſhed by him.

I. That by the *Canon* of Scripture, is to be underſtood a ſet Number or Catalogue of Books of Scripture. The word *Canon*, both in Eccleſiaſtical and Prophane Authors, ſignifies a Roll or Catalogue. Thus a [c] *Matricula*, or Regiſter, and Roll of Names, was called *Canon*. Κανὼν βασιλέων is the Inſcription of [d] *Ptolomy*'s Liſt of the Kings of the Four Monarchies, with the Years of their ſeveral Reigns annex'd. Such were the Chronological Canons which [e] *Plutarch* mentions; ſuch were alſo the Chronological Canons of *Euſebius*, who likewiſe ſtyles his Tables, containing the Parallel Places in the Goſpels, *Evangelical Canons*; and ſpeaking of the Books of Scripture, he [f] uſes the Word Canon and Catalogue promiſcuouſly. [g] *Tertullian* defines the genuine Books of Scripture to be thoſe, which were worthy to be inſerted into the Divine Code; and [h] *Origen* calls them the Eccleſiaſtical Canon. This is evidently the true ſignification of the word *Canon*, as it is uſed in relation to the Scriptures, and I know of no ancient Author that has underſtood it otherwiſe. But the Books of Scripture are ſtyled *Canonical*, ſometimes as belonging to the Canon of Scripture, and at other times, becauſe they were

[c] Socrat. Hiſt. l. 1. c. 17. Καθαιρεθήσεσθαι τῆς κλήρου, καὶ ἀλλότριον τοῦ κανόνος ἔσαι. Conc. Nicen. Can. 17. vid. Albaſpin. ad Conc. Antioch. Can. 2.

[d] Apud Petav. Ration. Temp. Par. 2.

[e] In vit. Solon. [f] Hiſt. l. 4. c. 26. l. 6. c. 25.

[g] Qui divino inſtrumento meruiſſent incidi. De Pudicit. c. 7.

[h] Apud Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 25.

confirmed

confirmed by the Apoſtolical Canons, or the Canons of Councils.

II. There is ſufficient Evidence to believe, that St. *John* did both finiſh and ſettle the Canon of Scripture. There is no doubt to be made, but that St. *John*, in ſo long a Life, had ſeen the Writings of all the reſt of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and ſignified his Approbation of them to thoſe with whom he converſed. For what could be more worthy of his care, or more neceſſary, than for him to aſcertain the Authority of thoſe Writings, that were to be the Rule of Faith and Practice, and the Preſervative of the Church againſt Hereſies, which were very numerous even in his time, and which he foreſaw would give ſo much trouble and ſcandal in future Ages? And it is upon this occaſion obſervable, that theſe Books, the Authority whereof has been called in queſtion, were chiefly deſigned againſt the Hereſies and Corruptions of falſe Brethren; which might be ſome hindrance at firſt to their Reception, thro' the ſubtilty and inſinuation of Hereticks; but theſe Books, upon this very account, were the more proper to be recommended by St. *John*. Three of them likewiſe out of ſeven, were of his own Writing. It is evident beyond all contradiction, that St. *John* muſt have ſeen, at leaſt, the Epiſtle of St. *Paul* to the Church of *Epheſus*, where he preſided. And yet this is taken notice of by no ancient Writer, but is left to be collected by circumſtances: *Euſebius* only informs us, that St. *John* reviſed the other Three Goſpels, before he wrote his own; and this *Euſebius* mentions upon a particular occaſion, thinking it concerned him to give ſome account how it came to paſs, that St. *John* added a Fourth Goſpel to the Three written before: And yet this very thing is omitted by St. *Athanaſius*, and by St. *Gregory Nazianzen*. And we learn from [i] *Photius* a remarkable circumſtance

[i] Cod. CCLIV.

omitted

omitted by *Euſebius* and St. *Jerom*, *viz.* that the Verſions of the Goſpels were approved by St. *John*, as well as the Originals. So little are Negative Arguments in this caſe to be relyed upon.

III. Tho' the Councils, mentioned by *Tertullian*, as having atteſted and confirmed the Canon of Scripture be omitted by other Authors, yet this is no proof that the Canon of Scripture was not atteſted and confirmed by ſuch Councils: for it only ſhews, that a Negative is no ſufficient proof in this caſe, as I ſhall fully make appear. *Euſebius* had occaſion enough to take notice of theſe Councils, tho' they had never had the Canon of Scripture under debate; at leaſt, where he writes of *Hermas*'s *Paſtor*, upon the account whereof, *Tertullian* ſpeaks of theſe Councils, it might be expected, that he ſhould have mentioned them. The Omiſſion of *Euſebius*, I preſume, will not be alledged as any prejudice to the truth of what *Tertullian* relates, as to that Book; why then ſhould it be urged in any other reſpect? The Synods of *Ancyra*, and *Neocæſarea*, are omitted by *Euſebius*: Were there therefore never any ſuch Synods? Were not their Canons received into the *Code of the Catholick Church?* The Council of *Nice* is little more than mentioned by him; and, how many Reaſons or Accidents might occaſion the omiſſion of others?

But *Euſebius* himſelf does ſhew ſufficiently, that there was a Canon of Scripture fix'd before his time, tho' he omitted the mention of thoſe Councils, by which it was eſtabliſhed, as *Tertullian* informs us. [k] *Euſebius* ſpeaks of certain Books, which were acknowledged to belong to the New Teſtament, contained in a [l] *Canon* or *Catalogue*; and when it was ſtill doubted of ſome Books, whether they belonged to this Canon, or not, he produces the Teſtimony of ancient Writers. St. *Athanaſius* does not expreſly

[k] Hiſt. l. 3. c. 3. [l] L. 4. c. 26. l. 6. c. 25.

mention

mention Councils, but he ſtyles all the Books of Scripture *Canonical*, which implies as much as what I have argued from *Tertullian*. He ſays, [m] that the Scriptures were not an uncertain, but a determined number of Books, eſtabliſhed by Canon; that the Books of the New Teſtament had been long ago thus eſtabliſhed; and expreſly ſays, that the ſacred Canons of the Holy Catholick and Apoſtolick Church, had declared the Four Goſpels to be of Divine Authority.

Since the Council of *Laodicæa* was held *A. D.* CCCLXVII. and St. *Gregory Nazianzen* died not till *A. D.* CCCLXXXIX. he might have mentioned this Council as well as thoſe of *Greece*, held either in *Tertullian*'s time, or before it; ſo might St. *Jerom* and *Ruffinus*: Which, inſtead of diſproving what I alledged from *Tertullian*, is a confirmation of it, and proves, that thoſe Councils might ſettle the Canon, tho' theſe Fathers omit the mention of them, becauſe they did not think it neceſſary to mention the Council of *Laodicæa*, when they treated of the Canon of Scripture; tho' this Council is, by all, acknowledged to have eſtabliſhed, or rather declared and aſſerted the Canon. But we underſtand from *Tertullian*, both that Councils had in his time rejected *Hermas*'s Paſtor, and that they had received the controverted Books; becauſe it appears from his words, that they had determined and eſtabliſhed the Code of the New Teſtament; and theſe controverted Books, are upon occaſion, cited by *Clemens Romanus*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and by *Tertullian* himſelf, which agrees with what has been alledged, that they had been approved by the Councils mentioned by *Tertullian*, and

[m] Πᾶσα γραφὴ ἡμῖν χειμαρρῶν θεόπνευστός ἐστιν, οὐκ ἀόριστα δε, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ὡρισμένα καὶ κεκανονισμένα ἔχει τὰ βιβλία. Synopſ. Sacr. Script. Edit. Par. p. 55. Τὰ δὲ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης πάλιν ὡρισμένα τε καὶ κεκανονισμένα βιβλία ταῦτα. p. 59. Εὐαγγέλια γὰρ τέσσαρα ἐθέσπισε ἡμῖν οἱ ἱεροὶ κανόνες τῆς ἁγίας καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. p. 155.

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed by ancient Canons, as St. *Athanaſius* affirms.

IV. Tho' uncanonical Books were read in Churches, and the Authority of ſome Books, which had been received into the Canon, was afterwards diſputed, this doth not prove that theſe Books were not inſerted by St. *John* into the Canon, which was atteſted and confirmed by thoſe Councils, as fix'd and eſtabliſh'd by him. The Firſt Epiſtle of *Clemens Romanus*, and ſome other Treatiſes, were read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, not as Canonical Scripture, but only as proper for Edification, in the nature of Homilies, and exhortations to Vertue and Piety. But in proceſs of time, this Practice was found inconvenient: For when, under the name and countenance of ſome ancient Author, Errors were propagated, by this means a way was opened for them into Churches; on which account, it was found requiſite to exclude from thence all Books but thoſe of the Canonical Scriptures.

And tho' there was ſome diſagreement about the Number of Canonical Books, after the determination of Councils, yet this only ſhews that theſe Councils were not alike known, or that their Authority was not alike acknowledged in all Churches. The Council of *Nice* was Univerſal, and under a Chriſtian Emperor, who ſent out his Edicts to inforce its Determinations; yet [n] St. *Auguſtin* confeſſes, that he, thro' ignorance, tranſgreſſed a Canon of this Council, and [o] St. *Hilary* declares, that he had been a Biſhop ſome time, and was to ſuffer Baniſhment for the Faith contained in the *Nicene* Creed, before he had heard the Creed it ſelf. How much more likely then was this to befal the Determinations and Canons of Councils, which were not ſo general, and were held in times of Perſecution? [p] *Tertullian* informs us, that Councils

[n] Aug. Epiſt. 110.
[o] Hilar. de Synod. in fin.
[p] De Jejun. c. 13

were very numerous, and very frequently held in *Greece*; and [q] *Juſtinian* ſays, that the Holy Apoſtles and Fathers ordained, that Synods of Biſhops ſhould be convened twice every Year. But it is incredible, that when Councils did ſo often meet, they ſhould not determine a thing of that importance, as the Canon of Scripture is; but the Determinations of Councils were not alike known to all, or all did not equally acquieſce in them.

A learned Author has lately endeavoured to prove, that the Code of the Four Goſpels was confirmed by a Council or College of the Apoſtles at *Epheſus*, *A. D.* CVII. and placed in the Archives of that See. But was any of the Apoſtles living at that time? Did St. *John*, the laſt of the Apoſtles, ſurvive till then? And for the Reaſons above-mentioned, there is no cauſe to confine the *Code*, confirmed and ſettled by St. *John*, to the Four Evangeliſts, or to ſuppoſe, with the ſame Author, that the Authority of the other Goſpels was not eſtabliſhed in the Church till St. *John* wrote his, becauſe the other Three Goſpels were approved by St. *John*; whereas, he argues, that they had not needed St. *John*'s approbation, if their Authority had been certain before, or if they had been publickly known, and had not lain concealed in few hands: for which *Euſebius* is cited, tho' all this is confuted by his account in every part of it. For [r] *Euſebius* does not ſay, that St. *John*, at the time of his writing his own Goſpel, firſt received and approved the other Three, but that having, by his own Teſtimony, confirmed the truth of them, he had received them as authentick: *Euſebius* does not ſay, that the other Goſpels were known before but to few; but expreſly, that they were known to all, and to St. *John*, as well as to others; and that St. *John* undertook the writing of his Goſpel, to ſupply what was omitted by the former Evangeliſts.

[q] Nov. 136. T. 20. c. 4. [r] Hiſt. l. 3. c. 24.

As

As it is of great concernment to aſſign the time of ſettling the Canon of Scripture, ſo it is of no leſs conſequence to obſerve, when the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, upon which the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith depend, was committed to Writing, and publiſh'd to the World. [f] *Theophylact* ſays, that the Goſpel of St. *Matthew* was written eight years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, St. *Mark*'s ten, St. *Luke*'s fifteen, St. *John*'s thirty two years after it. I ſhall conſider here only the time of writing St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, both becauſe it ſeems to be more certain than that of the reſt, and becauſe it is of more conſequence, that it ſhould be ſo. For when once his Goſpel was publiſh'd, there was not ſo much neceſſity for the reſt, but they might be deferr'd to ſuch Opportunities and Occaſions, as by the Divine Providence ſhould be offer'd.

But whereas St. *Matthew*, not only by *Theophylact*, but by [t] *Euthymius*, and generally by the Accounts in [u] ancient MSS. annex'd to his Goſpel, is ſaid to have penn'd it but eight years after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt; this is by ſome of late, upon the Authority of a Paſſage in *Irenæus*, ſet back to a much longer Period of time. Whether with ſufficient Reaſon, I ſhall examine. [x] *Irenæus* ſays, that St. *Matthew* publiſh'd his Goſpel, when St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* preach'd and founded a Church at *Rome*. Now we read in [y] *Euſebius*, that St. *Peter* came to *Rome* in the ſecond year of *Claudius*, which was eight years after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt; and in [z] *Lactantius*, that he and St. *Paul* came thither, at the latter end of *Nero*'s Reign. But according to what account ſoever we underſtand *Irenæus*, it cannot in ſtrictneſs be ſaid, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, at the ſame time, firſt preach'd, and laid

[f] Procem. in Matt. [t] Com. in Evang. apud Mill. in N. T. ex MS. Bodl. [u] Ham. in Matt. Mill. Proleg. p. 7. [x] L. iii. c. 1. [y] Chron. [z] De Mort. Perſecut. c. 2. & Inſtitut. l. iv. c. 21.

the Foundation of a Church at *Rome*. For St. *Paul* had not been at *Rome*, when he wrote his Epiſtle to the Chriſtians there, and yet their *Faith was ſpoken of throughout the world*, (Rom. i. 8, 10, 13, 15.) So that, if St. *Peter* never came to *Rome* till the latter end of *Nero*'s Reign; neither he, nor St. *Paul* can be ſaid, by preaching in perſon, to have founded a Church at *Rome*: but if St. *Peter*, according to *Euſebius*, planted a Church there, in the beginning of *Claudius*'s Reign, and St. *Paul* afterwards by his Epiſtle inſtructed and confirm'd the *Romans* in the Principles of Religion; both St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* may be ſaid to have preach'd the Goſpel there: St. *Peter* in perſon, and St. *Paul* by his Epiſtle; and both to have founded the Church by their Miniſtry. Whatever way we underſtand *Irenæus*, his Words muſt be taken in a Latitude; for ſtrictly ſpeaking, either St. *Peter* did not firſt come to *Rome* with St. *Paul*, but many years before; or elſe neither of them planted the Church at his coming thither, but both found it already planted.

It has been alledg'd from *Irenæus*, that tho' the Chriſtian Religion had been preach'd, yet a Church was not founded at *Rome*, till St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* had conſtituted *Linus* Biſhop there. To which purpoſe, it is obſerv'd, that St. *Paul*, in the beginning of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, ſtyles them, *beloved of God*, *called to be Saints*, but makes no mention of *Church*, or of *Biſhops*, as he does in his Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*, the *Galatians*, the *Theſſalonians*, and the *Philippians*; whereupon it is concluded, that a Biſhop having not been yet placed there, a Church was not yet founded.

But *Irenæus* writes contrary to what is urged from his Words. For he ſays, that [a] *the bleſſed A-*

[a] Θεμελιώσαντες ἐν τῇ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι Ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν Λίνῳ τὴν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισαν. Iren. l. iii. c. 3.

poſtles

poſtles having founded and erected a Church, appointed Linus *to be Biſhop*, that is, when they had founded and erected a Church, or a Church being founded and erected, as [b] *Valeſius* tranſlates the Words cited by *Euſebius*, not following the old [c] *Latin* Verſion of *Irenæus*, which is evidently wrong, but giving the direct Senſe of the Original. And it ſhould be conſider'd, that St. *Paul* writes to the *Saints at Epheſus, and to the faithful in Chriſt*, without mention either of *Church* or *Biſhop*, though *Timothy* was then Biſhop of *Epheſus*.

Thus much therefore is plain, that *Irenæus* muſt be underſtood of the firſt preaching the Goſpel, and forming a Church at *Rome*; but it is evident, that a Church muſt have been form'd there, long before St. *Paul* wrote his Epiſtle, at which time he had never been at *Rome*; and the Faith of the *Roman* Chriſtians was then ſo renowned, that it cannot be ſuppos'd to have been firſt preach'd there later, than the ſecond year of *Claudius*, which agrees with the common Account of the time of writing St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, *A. D.* XLII. or eight years from the Aſcenſion of our Saviour, St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Romans* being written *A. D.* LVII.

[b] Fundatâ jam & ædificatâ Eccleſiâ, Euſeb. Hiſt. l. v. c. 6.
[c] Fundantes igitur & inſtruentes beati Apoſtoli Eccleſiam.

CHAP. V.

Of the various Readings in the Old and New Teſtament.

IT is to be obſerv'd, that an extraordinary Providence has, in a great meaſure, ſecur'd the Holy Scriptures from thoſe Caſualties which are incident to humane Writings. For the great Antiquity of many Books of the Scriptures, beyond that of any other Books in the World, the multitude of Copies, which have been taken in all Ages and Nations, the difficulty to avoid miſtakes in tranſcribing Books, in a Language which has ſo many of its Letters, and of its Words themſelves ſo like one another, the defect of the *Hebrew* Vowels, and the late invention (as it is generally now acknowledged) of the Points, the change of the *Samaritan*, or ancient *Hebrew* for the preſent *Hebrew* Character, the Captivity of the whole Nation of the *Jews* for ſeventy Years, and the mixtures and changes which were, during that time, brought into their Language; in ſhort, all the accidents which have ever happened to occaſion Errors or Miſtakes in any Book, have concurred to cauſe them in the Old Teſtament; and yet the different Readings are much fewer, and make much leſs alteration in the Senſe, than thoſe of any other Book of the ſame bigneſs, and of any Note and Antiquity, if all the Copies ſhould be carefully examined, and every little variation as punctually ſet down, as thoſe of the Scriptures have been. The uſe only of Abbreviations, ſo common in all Languages, had cauſed ſuch confuſion in the *Roman* Laws, that [a] *Juſtinian* found it neceſſary to forbid, under ſevere Penalties, that any

[a] Juſtinian. Præf. ad Digeſt. & ad Cod.

ſhould

ſhould tranſcribe them for the future, without writing the Names of Men, and the Titles and Numbers of the Books at full length. But tho' from hence it may appear, that a peculiar Providence has been concerned in the preſervation of the Books of the Scriptures, yet from humane Conſiderations and Arguments, we may likewiſe be aſſured, that nothing prejudicial to the Authority of the Scriptures has happened by any of theſe means.

1. The defect in the *Hebrew* Vowels, and the late Invention of the Points, is no prejudice to the Authority of the Bible, as we now have it. Tho' the Points, which critically determine the exact reading of the *Hebrew* Tongue, be of a later Invention, yet that Tongue was never without its Vowels. For *Aleph*, *Vau*, and *Jod*, and (which ſome add) *He* and *Gnajm*, before the Invention of the Points, were uſed as Vowels, as it is evidently proved from [b] *Joſephus*, *Origen*, and St. *Jerom*, by the beſt Criticks in that Language. It muſt indeed be confeſs'd, that theſe Vowels could not be ſo effectual to aſcertain the true Reading, as the Points have ſince been; but whatever defect there might be in the Vowels, it was ſupplied by conſtant Uſe and Practice, and by ſome general Rules, which they obſerved in the Reading. The Bible being a Book, which, by Divine Commandment, was ſo often and carefully read both in publick and private, the *Hebrew* Text might be exactly read, and the true ſenſe certainly retain'd and known; and it is no wonder, that by conſtant uſe, and continual practice and cuſtom from their Infancy, the *Jews* could read it with eaſe and readineſs without Points, which is no more than is ordinarily done now by Men, who are skilful in that Language; and divers have attain'd to it by their own Obſervation and Induſtry. If there were the more difficulty in the *He-*

[b] Vid. Walton. Prolegom. iii. §. 49.

brew Tongue before the invention of Points, there was the more care and ſtudy uſed about it; the *Jews* having Times purpoſely ſet apart for the reading of the Law, ſtudied it with that diligence and exactneſs, that they knew it as well as they did their own Names, or better, as [c] *Joſephus* expreſſes it, if that were poſſible; and they uſed ſo great accuracy both in their Pronouncing and Writing, that there could be no danger that any conſiderable miſtake ſhould be occaſioned by any defect in the Vowels before the Points were found out. *This was a great part of the* Jewiſh *Learning*, (as [d] Biſhop *Walton* obſerves) *the true reading of the Text, and they who were moſt accurate and exact therein, were honoured moſt amongſt 'em, and had their Schools, and their Scholars and Diſciples, whom they inſtructed from time to time, till at length, in regard of their many Diſperſions and Baniſhments, that the true Reading might not be loſt with the Language, they began to affix Points to the Text, as well to facilitate the Reading, as to preſerve it the better from any Alteration or Change.*

But this is an Objection which never could have been made but in the Weſtern Parts of the World; for in the Eaſt they commonly write yet without Points, as the *Jews* likewiſe write the Weſtern Languages of the Countries where they live, without Points, in the *Hebrew* Character. The [e] *Samaritans* ſtill have no Points. And the [f] Children of the *Turks*, *Arabians*, and *Perſians*, and generally of all the *Mahometans*, learn to read without them. [g] *Iſaac Voſſius* ſays, the *Aſiaticks* laugh at the *Europeans*, becauſe they cannot read as they do without Vowels. [h] *Schickard* confeſs'd, that he had known Children of ſeven

[c] Joſeph. contr. Ap. lib. ii.
[d] *Conſiderat. conſidered*, c. x. §. 8.
[e] Walt. Prolegom. iii. §. 40. Morin. Epiſt. 15. & 70. inter Antiquit. Eccl. Orient.
[f] Joſeph. Scalig. Epiſt. 243.
[g] Voſſ. de Sibyll. Orac.
[h] Walt. Prolegom. iii. §. 50.

Years

Years of Age, read the *Pentateuch* merely by use. [i] *Clenard*, and *Erpenius* himself, who was so famous for the *Arabick*, and other Eastern Languages, both of them declared, that they learned the *Arabick* only by their own study and diligence from Books without Points: and *Erpenius* had attained to such accuracy in that Language, before he had read any Book with the Points, that *Isaac Casaubon* so far approved of the Translation which he had then made, of the *Arabick Nubian* Geography into *Latin*, that he was very earnest with him to publish it. *Ludovicus Capellus* besides, gives an instance from his own knowledge of one, who, when he had scarce been taught the *Arabick* Alphabet, made a great progress in that Tongue in four Months, only by his own industry, and without the help of Points.

All these things considered, it would be a strange Paradox to pretend, that there is no certainty in the ancient Eastern way of writing, and that no body can certainly know what their Authors meant, nay, that they did not know one another's meaning, as well as we do now in our manner of writing, before some certain time, when the Points are supposed to be first found out. It must be acknowledged, that several words have different significations, according to the difference of the Points; but this Objection may as well be brought against the vulgar *Latin*, or against any Book in the *Latin* Tongue: For there is no regular *Latin* Verb, which, in the *forming* of it, has not some words of different significations, according to the different Voices, and Moods and Tenses: And *Lego* being both of the first and of the third Conjugation, *Legere* has six different significations, and is thrice to be pronounced long, and thrice short; and yet all these Senses are easily distinguish'd by Children, without Accents. *Amare* has also six signifi-

[i] Lud. Capel. de Punct. Hebr. Antiqu. lib. ii. c. 27. §. 4, 5, 6.

cations,

cations, four from *Amo*, and two from *Amarus*. But ſuch Inſtances are ſo obvious, and yet ſo little obſerved, that I know no Man that has thought them worth the mentioning; nor ſhould I have done it, but upon this occaſion.

II. The change of the Old *Hebrew* Character into that now in uſe, is no prejudice to the Authority of the *Hebrew* Text; becauſe this was but the writing over that, which was before in one Alphabet into another, the Language being ſtill the ſame: And this, if it were done with ſufficient care (as we have all the reaſon in the world to believe it was) could make no material miſtakes; and we find it hath not, by the agreement between the *Hebrew* and the *Samaritan Pentateuch* ſtill extant.

III. The *Keri* and the *Ketib*, or the difference in ſome places between the Text and the Marginal Reading, is no prejudice to the Authority of the Scripture. For as the various Lections of the Bible are much fewer, conſidering the Antiquity of it, and the vaſt numbers of Copies, which have been tranſcribed in all Ages and Countries, than thoſe of any other Book: ſo many of them may be eaſily reconciled, and the occaſion of them as eaſily diſcovered. Some of them were occaſioned by the likeneſs of ſeveral of the *Hebrew* Letters, which were not eaſily to be diſtinguiſh'd in Books written in ſuch ſmall Characters, as [k] St. *Jerome* complains, were uſed in writing the *Hebrew* Bibles of his time. Others happen'd from Abbreviations, and ſome might proceed from Marginal Gloſſes.

It muſt likewiſe be obſerv'd, that all the words we meet with in the Margin of the *Hebrew* Bibles, are not to be look'd upon as various Lections, for divers of them were placed there, by the *Jews*, out of ſuperſtition, becauſe they ſcrupled to pronounce certain

[k] Hieron. Proæm. in Ezech. Comment. lib. 8.

words,

words, and therefore appointed others to be read in their ſtead. Thus *the Water of their Feet* is the *Hebrew* Marginal Reading, 2 *Kings* xviii. 27. which is omitted by our Tranſlators, *Iſa.* xxxvi. 12. tho' the *Keri* be the ſame in both places. But when the *Jews* were diſperſed into divers Countries, their Dialect or manner of Pronunciation muſt needs be different, and as the ſame words were pronounced differently, ſo they would in time be differently written, which gave one chief occaſion to the various Lections in the Old Teſtament; for from the emulation between the Schools of the *Jews* at *Babylon* and thoſe at *Jeruſalem*, there aroſe a ſet of various Lections under the Title of the *Eaſtern* and the *Weſtern* Readings, but it is acknowledged, that [l] they are of no moment, and that as to the ſenſe, it is much at one which reading is admitted, for they concern Matters of Orthography, rather than of Orthodoxy, as *Buxtorf* ſpeaks; the words are the ſame, but differently written and pronounced, as is viſible by the [m] Catalogues of both Readings. Thus when the *Gileadites* ſaid *Shibboleth*, and the *Ephraimites Sibboleth*, they differed only in Pronunciation, *Judges* xii. 6. and the *Jews* of *Paleſtine* and of *Europe*, who follow the Weſtern Readings, yet do not altogether reject the Eaſtern; but in ſome Editions have printed them both. The different Readings of [n] *Ben Aſcher* and *Ben Naphtali* had the ſame Original, the Eaſtern *Jews* following the one, and the Weſtern obſerving the other, but theſe concern the Points and Accents only, and not either the Words or Letters.

There is no ancient Book in the World, of which we can be certain, that we rightly underſtand it, if it be neceſſary to the right underſtanding of a Book, that it be without various Lections; for what Book

[l] Vid. Walt. Proleg. 8. §. 28.

[m] Apud. Druſ. De rectâ Lectione Ling. Sanct. c. 50. Polyglot. Tom. 6.

[n] Id. Proleg. iv. §. 9.

is

is there without 'em, or what Book of the ſame bigneſs, and of any Antiquity, has ſo few various Lections as the Bible? and what Book can be tranſcribed or printed, but it is liable to have Miſtakes made in it?

IV. No difference between the *Hebrew* Text and the Septuagint, and other Verſions, or between the ſeveral Verſions themſelves, is any Prejudice to the Authority of the Scriptures, nor can prove that the *Hebrew* Text was ever different in any thing material from what it is now. The Tranſlation of the Septuagint [o], as it hath been obſerv'd from St. *Jerom*, and others, is in many places rather a Comment or Paraphraſe, than a ſtrict Verſion, and gives the Senſe, rather than the Words of the *Hebrew* Text. Many times there is ſuppoſed to be a Difference, where there is none, for want of a ſufficient Knowledge of the Original, as [p] Dr. *Pocock* has ſhewn in divers Inſtances, and Biſhop *Pearſon* in others, beſides what has been written by *Iſaac Voſſius* to this purpoſe: And one very skilful in the Oriental Tongues, had undertaken to ſhew the Agreement between *Hebrew* and the Septuagint throughout, and had made a conſiderable Progreſs in the Work, as Bp. *Walton* informs us. Sometimes Differences proceed from the Miſtakes of Tranſcribers, as it muſt needs happen in Books, of which ſo many Copies have been taken in all Ages; and from the Raſhneſs of Criticks in making unneceſſary Alterations, or by inſerting into the Text ſuch Notes, as were at firſt plac'd only for Explication in the Margin. Thus it happen'd to St. *Jerom*'s Annotations, in his own Life-time, as he [q] complains. In ſome things of leſs conſequence, the Tranſlators might be miſtaken, or they might follow a different Copy.

[o] Id. Prolegom. ix. §. 12. & x. §. 8.

[p] Pocock Append. ad Port. Moſ. c. 1, 2, 3, 4. Pearſ. Præf. ad Septuag. Edit. Cantab. Iſ. Voſſ. de lxx. Interpret. Walt. Prol. ix. 46.

[q] Epiſt. ad Syn. & Fretell.

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The Authority of the Text of Scripture is greatly confirm'd from the Citations of the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers, from whence it appears that in the ſeveral Ages of the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches, the Copies which they made uſe of had no ſuch Variations from thoſe we now uſe, as to be of any ill conſequence in matters of Religion.

As to the Imputation that was charged upon the *Jews* by ſome of the Fathers, that they had corrupted the Scriptures in ſuch places, as, according to the Tranſlation of the Septuagint, and the Senſe of their Anceſtors, muſt prove the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion againſt them; this is to be underſtood of the Verſions of *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*, who being all either profeſs'd *Jews*, or Judaizing Hereticks, [r] deſign'd their Tranſlations to countenance their own Errors, eſpecially *Aquila*, who undertook his Verſion, purpoſely to oppoſe that of the Septuagint. Such of the Fathers, as did not underſtand the *Hebrew* Tongue, might think that the Variations from the Septuagint, in thoſe Verſions, proceeded from Alterations made in the *Hebrew* Text, ſince that Tranſlation. But we now find the Difference between the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint* not to be ſuch, as that the *Jews* can take any great Advantage from it. And it is now generally agreed, that the *Jews* never deſerv'd the Cenſure of having corrupted the *Hebrew* Text, though they perverted the Senſe of it, and where there were various Readings, choſe to follow that which was moſt favourable to their own Pretences, though it were in contradiction to the Judgment of their Forefathers, as well as the Chriſtians. And tho' it were even impoſſible to make Senſe of it, as in that famous Text, *Pſal.* xxii. 16. where the Change of *jod* for *vau* ſeems firſt to have been occaſion'd by a Miſtake of ſome Tranſcriber. For *Caari* was in the Margin, be-

[r] Iren. l. iii. c. 24.

 fore

fore it was brought into the Text, as appears from the [s] *Maſora*. *Philo* in a Diſcourſe cited [t] by *Euſebius* (who thereby owns the Truth of it) ſaid, that for the ſpace of above two thouſand years, there had not been a Word alter'd in the Law, but that the *Jews* would chooſe to die never ſo many deaths, rather than they would conſent to any thing in prejudice of it. And [u] *Joſephus* declares of the whole Old Teſtament, that it had ſuffer'd no Alteration, from the beginning down to his own Time. [x] *Morinus* himſelf, whatever he hath elſewhere ſaid to the contrary, declares in a Letter to Dr. *Comber* Dean of *Carliſle*, that he ſuppoſes no Man can doubt, but that the *Jewiſh* Copies, *cæteris paribus*, are to be preferr'd before any Copies of the *Samaritans*, which he in his Writings ſo highly magnifies.

It muſt be acknowledg'd, that the numbering of the Verſes and Words and Letters, and the obſerving which was the Middle Letter of every Book, could ſignify little to the ſecuring of the *Hebrew* Text entire, becauſe there may be the ſame Number of Verſes, and Words, and Letters in different Books, and the ſame number of Letters may make up different Words, and the ſame Words diverſly plac'd and apply'd, may expreſs a very different Senſe: nor could there be any Charm in a Word, that ſtood in the midſt of a Book, to keep all the reſt in their proper places. But this ſcrupulous and even ſuperſtitious Diligence of the *Jews*, in little things, is an Evidence of their conſtant Study of the Scriptures, and of the great Value and Reverence they had for it, ſo that they would neither corrupt it themſelves, nor ſuffer it to be corrupted by others, but were careful and zealous to preſerve every Letter and Tittle; and as I

[s] Vid. Bochart. Hieroz. P^t^ i. l. 3. c. 6.
[t] Euſeb. Præpar. Evang. l. viii. c. 6.
[u] Contra Apion. l. i.
[x] Antiq. Eccl. Orient. Epiſt. 38.

obſerv'd

obſerv'd before from *Joſephus*, they were ſo well acquainted with it, that he thought he could not fully enough expreſs their Skill and Accuracy, but by ſaying that they knew it better than their own Names. Our bleſſed Saviour, who ſo frequently reproves the Scribes and Phariſees, for their Traditions and falſe Gloſſes, never charges them with corrupting the Text; as he certainly would have done, if they had been guilty of it. And afterwards they could not corrupt it, without Diſcovery by the converted *Jews*, who were very numerous in *Jeruſalem*, till the Deſtruction of it, and many of them were living long after.

V. It is evident, and confeſs'd by the Criticks, that neither by theſe, nor by any other means, any ſuch Difference is to be found in the ſeveral Copies of the Bible, as to prejudice the fundamental Points of Religion, or weaken the Authority of the Scriptures. All relating to this Controverſy has been eagerly debated by contending Parties, who yet agree in this, whatever they differ'd in beſides, that the various Lections do not invalidate the Authority of the Scriptures, nor render them ineffectual to the End and Deſign of a Divine Revelation, inaſmuch as all the various Lections taken together, are no Prejudice to the Analogy of Faith, nor to any Points neceſſary to Salvation. [y] *Ludovicus Capellus*, who had ſtudy'd this Subject as much as any Man, and was as well able to judge of it, after the ſtricteſt Examination he could make, found, that the things relating either to Faith or Practice, are plainly contain'd in all Copies, whatever Difference there is in leſſer things, as in matters

[y] Non minus ex iis, quæ ſupra diſputata ſunt, planum eſt, id, quod ſtatim libri primi initio monuimus, & ſæpius toto opere inculcavimus, pleraſque omnes, quæ obſervari & deprehendi in ſacris libris poſſunt, varias lectiones, leviſſimi eſſe ac pene nullius momenti, ut parum admodum interſit, aut vero perinde omnino ſit, utram ſequaris, ſive hanc, ſive illam. Ludovic. Capel. Crit. Sacr. l. vi. c. 2.

of

of Chronology, which depend upon the Alteration, or the Omiſſion or Addition of a Letter, or in the Names of Men, or of Cities or Countries. But the fundamental Doctrines of Religion are ſo diſpers'd throughout the Scriptures, that they could receive no Damage nor Alteration, unleſs the whole Scriptures ſhould have been changed. Wherefore not only the moſt learned Proteſtants, but [z] *Bellarmin* himſelf, and the beſt Criticks amongſt the Papiſts have acknowledg'd, that all things relating to Articles of Faith, and Rules of Life, are deliver'd entire and uncorrupted in the Scriptures, notwithſtanding the various Lections. And though ſome of the *Roman* Communion have endeavour'd to prove the Neceſſity of an infallible Church, by Arguments drawn from hence; yet, ſays [a] Biſhop *Walton*, *I do not remember, that in any particular Controverſy between them and us, they urge any one place of Scripture, for their Cauſe, upon the Uncertainty of the Reading without Points; which plainly ſhews, that there is no ſuch Uncertainty in the Text unpointed, as is pretended.* F. [b] *Simon* complains, that the Catalogues of various Lections are much larger than they ought to be, and that for the moſt part they are of no moment, and he charges *Capellus* more than once, with multiplying 'em without Reaſon. *Morinus* indeed made it his Endeavour to leſſen the Authority of the *Hebrew* Text in favour of the Septuagint, and the Vulgar *Latin*, but his Authority is very inconſiderable, when compared with thoſe of the ſame Communion, who have declar'd themſelves againſt his Opinion. In [c] the Life of *Morinus*, written by

[z] Cæterum non tanti momenti ſunt ejuſmodi errores, ut in iis, quæ ad fidem & bonos mores pertinent, Scripturæ Sacræ integritas deſideretur. Plerumque enim tota diſcrepantia variarum lectionum in dictionibus quibuſdam poſita eſt, quæ ſenſum aut parum, aut nihil mutant. Bellarmin. de Verbo Dei, l. ii. c. 2.

[a] *Conſiderator conſidered*, c. xii. §. 4.

[b] Hiſt. Crit. V.T. l. iii. c. 23. [c] Joh. Morin. Vit.

F. *Si-*

F. *Simon*, there is this Character of *Capellus* and *Morinus*, that if they be compared as to what they have both written concerning the Bible, *Morinus* ſhews more Learning in his Books, but it is very often not to the purpoſe; whereas *Capellus* has more Sagacity and Judgment, and never wanders from his Subject, but proves what he is upon, by the ſtrongeſt Arguments. And as ſevere as this Cenſure may ſeem to be, yet it is juſtified in effect, by the confeſſion of *Morinus* himſelf. For he [d] acknowledgeth to *Buxtorf*, that he never throughly apply'd himſelf to the Study of the *Hebrew* Tongue, that he had read nothing in *Hebrew* for ſeven years together, and that therefore he did not queſtion, but he had made many Miſtakes, eſpecially in his *Samaritan* Exercitations, great part of which were written in haſte, and he was forc'd to uſe ſuch a variety of Authors, that he believes it impoſſible, but that he muſt have been often miſtaken. The Authority of *Morinus* then ſignifies nothing in prejudice to the *Hebrew* Text. And [e] *Spinoza* himſelf has own'd, that he could for certain affirm, that he had obſerv'd no Fault nor various Reading, which concern'd the Moral Precepts, that could render them obſcure or doubtful.

Biſhop *Walton* has, with great Learning and Judgment, ſumm'd up the Arguments on all ſides, and as [f] F. *Simon* acknowledgeth, has examin'd this matter with more Exactneſs than all that had gone before him. His Polyglot Bibles give an ocular Demonſtration to the Truth of what he maintains, that there is nothing of conſequence, either as to Faith or Practice, concern'd in the difference of the ſeveral Copies of the *Hebrew* Text, or of the ſeveral Verſions. And as

[d] Epiſt. 70. inter Antiq. Eccl. Orient.

[e] Hoc pro certo affirmare poſſum, me nullam animadvertiſſe mendam, nec lectionum varietatem, circa moralia documenta, quæ ipſa obſcura aut dubia reddere poſſunt. Tractat. Theolog. Polit. c. 9.

[f] Crit. Hiſt. V.T. l. iii. c. 21.

many Sects and Diviſions as there are amongſt Chriſtians, and as many different Tranſlations as they make uſe of, they all acknowledge the Authority of the Originals, and their Tranſlations in the main are the ſame; however, they diſagree in rendring ſome particular Paſſages, which concern the different Opinions of the ſeveral Parties, and upon that account maintain their own Tranſlation to be more correct than others. If we allow of [g] Mr. *Selden*'s Judgment, who was very able to make a true one, and far enough from being prejudiced in the caſe, he ſays, *the* Engliſh *Tranſlation of the Bible is the beſt Tranſlation in the World, and renders the ſenſe of the Original beſt, taking in for the* Engliſh *Tranſlation the Biſhop's Bible, as well as King* James's. However, by different Tranſlations, and by comparing divers Copies and Verſions to make out the true Reading, many Texts become better underſtood, and more fully explained, than if there had been but one Reading, and no difference in the Tranſlations.

VI. And no leſs may be ſaid in behalf of the New Teſtament than of the Old; for the Books of it were kept from the beginning as a ſacred Treaſure, with great care and reverence, and were conſtantly read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and ſoon tranſlated into all Languages. The Primitive Chriſtians choſe to undergo any Torments, rather than they would deliver up the Books of Scripture to their Perſecutors to be deſtroyed, and they were no leſs careful to preſerve them uncorrupted by Hereticks. Beſides, when Hereticks attempted to corrupt any Text of Scripture to ſerve their particular Hereſies, they were declared againſt, not only by the Orthodox, but by other Hereticks, who were not concerned for thoſe Opinions, in behalf whereof the Corruption was intended. So that it was impoſſible for any Corruptions to be

[g] *Table-Talk.*

 impoſed

impoſed upon the Church, or to paſs undiſcovered even by ſome of the Hereticks themſelves. They muſt be deſigned for ſome End, and to authorize ſome particular Doctrines, and then all, who were not for thoſe Doctrines, and more eſpecially thoſe who were againſt them, would certainly oppoſe ſuch Corruptions. God, who, for ſuch wiſe Reaſons, permits Hereſies, that we are told, they *muſt be*, 1 Cor. xi. 19. may, for the like Reaſons, permit various Lections, and other Accidents, to befal the Scriptures, which, through the Sins of Men, prove an encouragement or pretence to the introduction and ſupport of Heretical Doctrines: yet theſe Hereſies, at the ſame time, ſerve as one means of ſecurity againſt wilful and dangerous Alterations.

The agreement likewiſe of the *Greek* Text of the New Teſtament, with the ſeveral ancient Verſions, and with the Quotations found in the Writings of the Fathers, who cited and alledged them from the Times of the Apoſtles, proves that there have been no alterations of any ſuch conſequence, as to make the Scriptures inſufficient for the Ends of a Divine Revelation. If any Man be of another Opinion, let him inſtance in any one Article of Faith, or Rule of Life, which cannot be proved from the Scriptures. It is not enough for him to ſhew, that ſome one or more Texts, which have been brought in proof of it, are diſputed, but he muſt ſhew that it can be proved by no Text, which is clear and undiſputed. Moſt of the various Lections in the New Teſtament are either of no moment, being in ſynonymous words, or expletive Particles, or they are ſo apparent *Errata*, that they may eaſily be diſcerned and corrected. There is hardly [h] one Text, which concerns any Article of Faith, that has ſuch a different Reading, as is contrary to ſound Doctrine, and if it be contrary, yet the ſame Doctrines

[h] Vid. Præf. ad Gr. Teſt. Oxon. 1675.

are taught in ſo many ſeveral places of Scripture, that the different Reading of one or two Texts can be no prejudice to the conſtant Tenour and undoubted Reading of ſo many other. The want of Accents, and Points, and diſtinction of words in ancient MSS. Abbreviations, the likeneſs of Words or Letters, and the repetition of the ſame Word, whereby it ſometimes came to paſs, that the intermediate Sentence was left out by Tranſcribers: Theſe are common Accidents, which have occaſioned various Lections in all Books. But it happened beſides, that *Harmonies* of the Goſpel's being drawn up, whether for publick or private uſe, wherein the Texts of the ſeveral Evangeliſts, relating to the ſame thing, were ſet in different Columns, the Tranſcribers ſometimes [i] inſerted the words of one Evangeliſt into the Text of another; and the ſame confuſion was made in other Books of Scripture, by removing the Words of parallel places from the Margin into the Text. And the *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles* in the Liturgies, had ſuch Alterations, or Additions, as were requiſite to make the Senſe compleat in ſuch Parts of Scripture, as were ſelected for that purpoſe; which Alterations were afterwards tranſcribed into the Books of Scripture; as if *John* xxi. 19. *he ſaith unto him, follow me*, ſhould from [k] our Liturgy, be altered into, *Jeſus ſaid unto Peter, follow me*. But ſuch as theſe, and many others, which help to ſwell the number of various Lections, make no variations in the Senſe.

The various Lections of the Holy Scriptures, are ſo far from being an Argument againſt their Authority, that they rather help to prove it, ſince they are comparatively ſo few in a Book of ſo great Antiquity. For no care and regard, inferiour to that, which we muſt

[i] Quod in eâdem re alius Evangeliſta plus dixit, in alio, quia minus putaverint, addiderunt. Hieron in 4. Evang. Præf. ad Damas.

[k] *Goſpel for St.* John *the Evangeliſt's Day.*

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe Men to have of a Book, which they are convinced is of Divine Authority, could have produced a leſs variety of Readings in a Book of much leſs Antiquity. They are all of no conſequence to the prejudice of the End and Deſign of a Revelation; and therefore they come under the number of ſuch Accidents, as God cannot be obliged in his providence to prevent. But the Bible could not, without the ſignal Providence of God, have been preſerved for ſo many Ages, under ſo many Changes and Revolutions, which the Wiſdom of God, for Reaſons elſewhere obſerved, ſaw fit to permit, much leſs could it have eſcaped with ſo inconſiderable Variations, in the many Copies taken, and Verſions made in different Ages and diſtant Countries, unleſs it had been ſecured by a particular Providence, from thoſe Corruptions and Alterations, which are ſo frequent in Humane Writings.

What has been ſaid upon this Subject, is confirmed by the large and laborious Collection of various Readings lately publiſhed upon the New Teſtament; for that learned Author, with the incredible pains and ſtudy of near [l] Thirty Years, has reviſed whatever had been done by others before him in this way, and has made many Additions of his own, out of MSS. and printed Copies, in all Languages, that had not been conſulted, or not ſufficiently examined. He has, in collating [m] one Edition, added above [n] Seven hundred various Lections, which *R. Stephens* had omitted, not thinking them, it ſeems, conſiderable enough to be inſerted. He has not omitted the Collections of *Petrus Faxardus*, Marqueſs of *Veles*, tho' he had once [o] rejected them as inſignificant, but was at laſt perſuaded by ſome Friend, againſt his own Opinion, to put them into the *Appendix*. He has noted every

[l] Mill. Prolegom. in N. T. p. 167.
[n] P. 162.
[m] Edit. complut.
[o] P. 138, 167.

Addition, and Omiſſion, and Variation, which has been obſerved of any Word, or Syllable, and even of any Letter, or Point, or Accent, in any ancient Copy, in all Languages, throughout the New Teſtament. He has examined the Citations of all ancient Authors, and has given us the Hiſtory of the Text of Scripture, ſhewing, as he ſays, in what ſtate and condition it has been in every Age, ſince the firſt propagation of the Goſpel to this time. In ſhort, nothing has been wanting to encreaſe the Number, or add to the weight of various Lections. But after all this care and diligence, he declares, that [p] much the greateſt part of various Lections have been occaſioned by Parallel Places of the *Goſpels*, written in the Margin, which afterwards were, by Tranſcribers, inſerted in the Text; and that, in his Collection, above One thouſand ſix hundred various Lections are of this ſort: That [q] the Canon of Scripture never ſuffered any corruption by Hereticks: And [r] that this great number of various Lections can be no cauſe of doubt or ſuſpicion to judicious Men, of the Authority of the *Greek* Text, but is, on the contrary, a means to prove and confirm the truth and certainty of it. And he has effectually ſhewn that controverted Verſe, 1 *John* v. 7. to be Authentick, by conſidering all that has been on both ſides produced.

Many Men ever ſince the Reformation, both in our own, and other Countries, who underſtood Religion beſt, and were moſt zealous in defence of it, have been moſt forward and induſtrious to publiſh the Bible in all Languages, and with the various Lections of each Language. And whatever ſome may hope, and others fear, Experience have ſhewn, that they have been no prejudice, but an advantage to Religion, and afford

[p] P. 71. [q] P. 75. & Not. in 1 Joh. v. 7. p. 746, 747.
[r] P. 143.

an ocular demonſtration, how Chriſtians of all Nations and Languages agree, both in the Canon, and in the Text of Scripture.

CHAP. VI.

Of the difficulties in Chronology in the Holy Scriptures.

CHronology is the part of Learning, which is moſt nice and difficult to be exactly adjuſted, becauſe it depends upon ſo many ſeveral Circumſtances, and comprehends ſo great a variety of Affairs in all Ages and Nations, and how punctually ſoever the Accounts of Time be ſet down at firſt, yet the leaſt alterations in one Word, or Letter, may cauſe a great difference in Copies, and the difference of *Epoches* in the computations of different Countries, eſpecially at great diſtances of Time as well as Place, is ſuch, that the exacteſt Chronology may eaſily be miſtaken, and may be farther entangled and perplex'd by thoſe, who endeavour to rectifie what they think amiſs; for that which was exact at firſt, is often made faulty by him who thought it ſo before. But I ſuppoſe, that no material Exception will lie againſt the Scripture upon the account of any difficulties in Chronology, if theſe two things be made out. I. That differences in Chronology do not infer uncertainty in the Matters of Fact themſelves. II. That differences in Chronology do not imply, that there was any Chronological Miſtake made by the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures; but that they have been occaſioned by the miſtakes of Tranſcribers or of Expoſitors.

I. Differences in Chronology do not infer uncertainty in the Matters of Fact themſelves: Becauſe the point of Time is but one Circumſtance, and that eaſi-

ly miſtaken by a thouſand Accidents; and there may be many other circumſtances ſo particular, and ſo well atteſted, as to give ſufficient evidence to the truth of things related, notwithſtanding any uncertainty in the circumſtance of Time. For which reaſon, [a] *Plutarch* did not reject the relation of a Diſcourſe that paſs'd between *Solon* and *Cræſus*, tho' he could not anſwer the Objections brought from Chronology to prove it feign'd, becauſe he found it delivered by good Authors, and ſaw nothing improbable in it, but every thing very likely and ſuitable to *Solon*'s temper; and he thought it unreaſonable to reject a Matter of Fact, which had no other Objection againſt it, but ſome difficulties in Chronology; when, ſays he, innumerable Perſons have endeavoured to rectifie the Chronological Canons, but could never be able to this day to reconcile the differing Opinions. And [b] he obſerves in another place, how difficult it is to adjuſt the Accounts of Time, eſpecially of the *Olympiads*, the Tables whereof are reported to have been taken by *Hippias*, upon no good Authority. The uncertainty of Chronology is a general complaint made by the beſt Hiſtorians, and therefore if this Objection have any weight, it muſt invalidate the Authority of all Hiſtory.

A very learned and accurate Author has ſhewn the uncertainty in Chronology [c] during the firſt Monarchy, both in reſpect *of Kingdoms*, viz. *the Kingdom of* Aſſyria *it ſelf, and the Kingdoms contemporary with it*, and of *Perſons and Occurrences*. But doth this prove that there never were any ſuch Kingdoms, nor any ſuch Perſons and Occurrences? [d] *Dion Chryſoſtomus* has an Oration to prove, that *Troy* was never taken. And there have been no fewer than [e] ſixteen different

[a] Plut. in Solon. [b] In Numâ.
[c] *Mr.* Milner's *Defence of A. Biſhop* Uſher.
[d] Orat. xi. [e] Ruald. in Plut. Animadv. ult.

Opinions

Opinions concerning the time when *Homer* lived; the firſt of which, places him in the time of the deſtruction of *Troy*; the laſt, Five hundred Years after it. Was there never therefore any ſuch Poet, but were the Books under his Name made by chance, not only without Truth, but without Deſign, by the lucky meeting together of Letters and Words? It is uncertain when the City of *Rome* was firſt built; for [f] *Saluſt*, and others, contrary to the common Opinion, that it was founded by *Romulus*, have aſcribed the Foundation of it to the *Trojans*. And [g] thoſe who make *Romulus* the Founder, yet are at a ſtrange diſagreement concerning the Parents of *Romulus*, and the time of his Birth. Some [h] have called his Mothers Name *Ilia*, ſome *Rhea*, ſome *Silvia*; others, as *Livy*, *Rhea Silvia*; yet ſtill there is a farther difference about the time of the Foundation of the City, which has occaſioned great Diſputes among Chronologers. What then muſt follow from hence? Why, if the uncertainty of the time when any Fact was done, imply the uncertainty of the Fact it ſelf, we muſt fairly conclude, that it is uncertain whether *Rome* was ever built at all, or at leaſt, we muſt, with [i] *Temporarius* believe, that there never was any ſuch Man as *Romulus*. The Copies of *Diogenes Laertius* place the time of *Epicurus*'s Death nine Years before he was born, as [k] *Menagius* has obſerved; but the Enemies of Religion have too great a value for *Epicurus*, to give him up for that reaſon, and to conclude that there never was ſuch a Man. But it is yet more ſtrange, that the time of ſo late and ſo remarkable a thing as the taking of *Conſtantinople* by the *Turks*, ſhould be placed by ſome a Year ſooner than by others. This was an Action known and diſcourſed of throughout all

[f] Saluſt. Bell. Catalin. Dionyſ. Halicar. l. 1.
[g] Plutarch. in Romulo. [h] Dionyſ. Halicar. ib.
[i] Temporar. Chron. Demonſt. lib. iii.
[k] Menag. obſerv. in Diog Laert.

Europe,

Europe, and is a pregnant inſtance, how little Reaſon there is to diſpute the Certainty of a thing from any Uncertainty of Time, if other Circumſtances concur to aſſure us of the Truth of it. *The Chronologers are not a little aſhamed*, ſays Mr. *Gregory*, *that they ſhould not be able to ſatisfy us, concerning ſo late and famous a Calamity, as the Siege of* Conſtantinople *by* Mahumed *the Second* [1].

II. The differences in Chronology do not imply, that there was any Chronological Miſtake made by the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures, but they ariſe from the Miſtakes of Tranſcribers or Expoſitors. To be convinced of this, we need only reflect a little upon ſome of thoſe things, which are apt to cauſe Miſtakes in the Computations of Chronology; and it will ſoon appear, how unreaſonable it is to imagine, that no Book can be of Divine Inſpiration, which is not fitted to ſecure Men from the Errors, which it is natural for them to commit in things of that Intricacy.

1. Many difficulties in Chronology are occaſion'd by not obſerving, that that which had been ſaid before in the general, is afterwards reſum'd and deliver'd in the Particulars contain'd under it. For the total Sum of any Term of Years being ſet down firſt, before the Particulars have been inſiſted upon and explain'd, has led ſome into Miſtakes, by ſuppoſing, that the Particulars afterwards mention'd were not to be comprehended in it, but to be reckon'd apart, as if they had happen'd afterwards in order of Time, becauſe they are laſt related in the courſe of the Hiſtory. Thus *Gen.* xi. 26. it is ſaid that *Terah lived ſeventy years and begat Abram*; and verſ. 32. that *the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.* But *Gen.* xii. 4. it is written that *Abram was ſeventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran:* which is inconſiſtent, if we ſuppoſe that *Abram*

[1] Jo. Greg. de Æris & Epochis, c. iii.

liv'd

liv'd in *Haran* till the Death of his Father *Terah*: but if we conſider that the whole number of years which *Terah* liv'd, is ſet down *Gen.* xi. 32. and that the Departure of *Abram* out of *Haran*, which is related *Gen.* xii. yet happen'd before his Father's Death, there will be no Inconſiſtency; but it will be evident, if *Terah* was but ſeventy years old when *Abram* was begotten, and *Abram* was but ſeventy five years old when he went out of *Haran*, that *Abram* left his Father *Terah* in *Haran*, where he liv'd after *Abram*'s departure from him to the Age of two hundred and five years. Though during his Father's Life, he did upon occaſion return to *Haran*. For the final Removal of *Abram* was not till the Death of his Father, as we learn from *Acts* vii. 4. And if this way of relating that in General firſt, which is afterwards ſet forth in the Particulars, be attended to in the Interpretation of the Scriptures, it will afford a Solution of many Difficulties, as [m] St. *Auſtin* has obſerv'd, which otherwiſe are inexplicable. Others ſuppoſe *Abram* was the youngeſt of *Terah*'s Sons, though mention'd firſt, and then there is no Difficulty in the Chronology; only by this and other Inſtances we may obſerve that the eldeſt Brother is not always placed firſt in Scripture, but ſometimes the youngeſt, out of reſpect to him, for his Favour with God, and his greater Dignity and Worth: and therefore whatever Difficulties in Chronology ariſe upon this Suppoſition, that the Son firſt named muſt therefore neceſſarily be firſt born, proceed from a Miſtake.

2. Sometimes the principal number is ſet down, and the odd or leſſer number is omitted, which being added to the great or principal number in ſome other place, cauſes a difference not to be reconciled, but by conſidering that it is cuſtomary in the beſt Authors not always to mention the leſſer numbers, where the

[m] Aug. Qu. Sup. Geneſ. c. 25.

matter

matter doth not require it. And we have evident Proof of this in the Scriptures. The time of the ſojourning of the Children of *Iſrael* in the Land of *Canaan*, and of their dwelling in *Egypt* is ſaid to be the ſpace of four hundred years, *Gen.* xv. 13. *Acts* vii. 6. which yet was in all four hundred and thirty years, *Exod.* xii. 40. *Gal.* iii. 17. The *Iſraelites*, who came out of *Egypt*, are computed to be *ſix hundred thouſand and three thouſand and five hundred and fifty*, Num. i. 46. ii. 32. but *Moſes* ſpeaking of them, *Num.* xi. 21. leaves out the three thouſand and five hundred and fifty. *Jerubbual* or *Gideon* is ſaid to have had *threeſcore and ten* Sons by his Wives, beſides *Abimelech*, whom he had by a Concubine, *Judg.* viii. 30, 31. and *Abimelech* is often ſaid to have ſlain theſe threeſcore and ten Brethren, though *Jotham* the youngeſt of them is at the ſame time ſaid to have eſcaped, *Judg.* ix. 5, 18, 24, 56. The *Benjamites* that were ſlain, *Judg.* xx. 35. are ſaid to be *twenty and five thouſand and an hundred men*, whereas verſ. 46. they are reckon'd only twenty and five thouſand Men. 1 *Cor.* xv. 5. we read that our Saviour was *ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve*, though St. *Matthias* was not choſen into the number of the Apoſtles till after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt, and S. *Mark* ſays preciſely that *he appeared unto the eleven, as they ſat at meat*, Mark xvi. 14. Thus in Heathen Authors the *Trojan* [n] Fleet is ſaid to conſiſt of a thouſand Ships, whereas *Homer* makes them two hundred more, as [o] *Thucydides* reckons them, or one hundred ſixty ſix, by his Scholiaſt's counting, but the Hiſtorian did not care to be ſo punctual. An [p] hundred Acres of Land was

[n] Si, inquam, numerus non eſt ad amuſſim; ut non eſt, cum dicimus mille naves iiſſe ad Trojam, centumvirale eſſe judicium Romæ. Varro de Re Ruſt. l. ii. c. 1.

[o] Thucyd. l. i. c. 10.

[p] Centuriam nunc dicimus (ut idem Varro ait) ducentorum jugerum modum: olim autem ab centum jugeribus vocabatur Centuria; ſed

was by the *Romans* call'd *Centuria*; but in proceſs of time the ſame Name was given to double that Number of Acres. The *Tribes* had that Denomination, becauſe they at firſt were but Three; but ſtill kept that Name, though they were [q] Thirty five. The Judges ſtyled *Centumviri*, were at firſt five more than an hundred, and afterwards [r] almoſt twice that number, yet ſtill they retain'd the ſame Name; as the LXXII Interpreters are commonly ſtyled the *Septuagint*. Since therefore it is manifeſt, that the leſſer Numbers are ſometimes omitted both in the Old and New Teſtament, as well as in other Authors, and the principal and greater numbers, whether more or leſs than the preciſe Calculation, are only ſet down, and at other times the leſſer Numbers are ſpecified, it is reaſonable to make Abatements for this in adjuſting the accounts of Chronology.

3. Sometimes an *Epocha* may be miſtaken by Chronologers: as *Gen.* vi. 3. *And the Lord ſaid, my Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man: for that he alſo is fleſh, yet his days ſhall be an hundred and twenty years.* But from *Gen.* v. 32. compared with *Gen.* viii. 13. the Flood muſt happen but an hundred years after theſe Words ſeem to have been ſpoken: though if we compute not from the time, when this was threatned, but from the beginning of Man's Apoſtaſy, which we may ſuppoſe then to have been already Twenty years, there will be no Difficulty in it. Or elſe the Threatning, though placed after it, might be denounced Twenty years before the Five hundredth year of *Noah*'s Age, which falls under the Obſervation abovemention'd of St. *Auſtin*. [s] St. *Jerom* indeed ſays, that the time allow'd Mankind for Repentance was

ſed mox duplicata nomen retinuit: ſicuti Tribus dictæ primum à partibus populi tripartitò diviſi, quæ tamen nunc multiplicatæ priſtinum nomen poſſident. Columell. lib. v. c. 1.

[q] Cic. in Rullum. [r] Plin. l. vi. Epiſt. 33.

[s] Hieron. Qu. in Geneſ.

ſhortned

ſhortned for their Contumacy, and the Flood was brought upon the World twenty years ſooner than was deſign'd, if their Provocations had not haſten'd it.

4. Variations in Chronology may ſometimes proceed from the Likeneſs of two Words, which occaſion'd the writing the one for the other. Thus *Acts* xiii. 20. ſome read, ὡς ἔτεσί τε τριακοσίοις, not ἔτεσι τετρακοσίοις. Some famous Copies, from whence moſt others now remaining may have been tranſcribed, might happen to be uncorrect in ſome of theſe leſs material parts of Scripture: the Numeral Letters were eaſily miſtaken, as we ſee our Figures now are; and when they number'd by Letters, Miſtakes might the oftner happen, becauſe the Tranſcribers might unawares write down a Letter of the foregoing or following Word, inſtead of the true Numeral Letter, when there was any Likeneſs between them; and the *Hebrew* Letters being ſome of them ſo very much alike, might be a readier occaſion of Miſtake. This change of Numeral Letters ſome think to have occaſion'd the Difficulty concerning the Age of [t] *Ahazia*, Son of *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, when he began to reign, 2 *Kings* viii. 26. 2 *Chron.* xxii. 2. And that ſuch Miſtakes have been made in tranſcribing the Septuagint, is evident, becauſe the ſeveral Copies of that Verſion have different accounts of Chronology, and they alſo differ from the Copies made uſe of by *Africanus* and *Euſebius*. Miſtakes of this kind are very [u] common in all *Greek* and *Latin* Authors; and to prevent this Inconve-

[t] כ. 20. *bearing the like Reſemblance to* מ. 40. *as* ג. 3. *does to* מ. 40. *which occaſion'd the miſtake of three days in the Septuagint, for forty in the Hebrew*, Jon. iii. 4.

[u] Error fortaſſe ex notis ortus——nuſquam non iſto modo in bonis utriuſque Linguæ Scriptoribus eſt peccatum. Caſaub. ad Theoph. Charact. Proem. Sed non dubito Librariorum potius negligentia, præſertim tot jam ſeculis intercedentibus veritatem fuiſſe corruptam, quam

conveniency, Mr. *Greaves* acquaints us, that the Emperor *Ulug Beg*, Nephew to *Tamerlane* the Great, [x] in his Aſtronomical Tables (the moſt accurate of any in the Eaſt) has expreſs'd the Numbers of the principal Epocha's, firſt in Words at length, and again in Figures, and then a third time in particular Tables: whoſe Example this excellent Author alledgeth for his own Exactneſs in deſcribing the Dimenſions of the Pyramids after the ſame manner; ſuppoſing it very improbable, if any one of theſe Accounts ſhould happen to be alter'd, that two of them ſhould not agree, and that thoſe two which agree, ſhall not expreſs the true Number.

5. In ſome places, the Alterations which cauſe the differences in the Chronology of the Septuagint from that of the *Hebrew* Text, are ſo uniform, that they could not be made but by deſign of ſome Tranſcribers, or of the Tranſlators themſelves. For inſtance, in the Lives of the five firſt Patriarchs, and of *Enoch* the ſeventh, they add an hundred years before their having Children, and deduct the ſame number of years from the time they liv'd afterwards: which is [y] conjectur'd to have been done, becauſe they ſuppos'd that by years there, are to be underſtood Lunar years, or Months, and ſo they alter'd the Chronological account of their Lives. For if thoſe be the years meant by the *Hebrew* account, they muſt have been Fathers of Children at 5, 6, 7, or 8 years of Age. This indeed is a very abſurd Suppoſition, not only for the Reaſon now mention'd, and becauſe *Methuſelah* himſelf, by this account, would not have liv'd much more than Fourſcore Solar years, but becauſe *Moſes* in his Relation of the Flood, and upon other occaſions expreſly divides the year into Months. But another

quam ut Propheta erraverit. Sicut in hoc ipſo noſtro opuſculo futurum credimus, ut deſcribentium incuria, quæ non incurioſe à nobis ſunt digeſta, vitientur. Sulpic. Sever. Hiſtor. Sacr. lib. i. cap. 70.

[x] Greaves Pyramidogr. [y] Vid. Lud. Capell. Chron. Sacr.

Conjecture

Conjecture is, that it might be ſuppoſed, that as Mens Lives were longer then, ſo the Age at which they were capable of Marriage, muſt not be the ſame that it is now, but muſt bear proportion to the length of their Lives; and therefore they altered the Chronology, to make the Patriarchs Fathers of Children at ſuch an Age, as might anſwer to the Age at which Men are capable of having Children in theſe latter Times. But according to the *Septuagint*, *Methuſelah* out-lived the Flood fifteen Years, which contradicts the Hiſtory of the Flood, as it is related in that Verſion: This probably could not happen but by ſome Alteration afterwards made; for tho' it was thus in [z] *Euſebius*'s time in the Books, which were every where in common uſe, yet it was not in all Copies. However, this ſhews that the Variations in the *Septuagint*, can with no reaſon be alledged againſt the Authority of the *Hebrew* Account.

The mention of *Cainan*, the Son of *Arphaxad*, both in the Verſion of the Septuagint, and in the Goſpel of St. *Luke*, tho' it be not in the *Hebrew*, is a matter of greater difficulty. But Biſhop [a] *Walton* notwithſtanding, ſaw ſufficient reaſon to conclude however, with ſuch caution and candor as became ſo great a Judgment, that the *Septuagint* followed the *Hebrew* Copies of thoſe Times: and the Anſwers to the Arguments brought to prove the contrary, have ſince been conſiderably enforced by the Learned [b] *Iſaac Voſſius*.

There is reaſon to believe, that the *Hebrew* and the *Samaritan* Account were the ſame in [c] St. *Jerom*'s time, and that the difference between them has happened ſince.

[z] Euſeb. Chron. [a] Prolegom. ix. §. 64, &c.

[b] Caſtigat. ad Script. Georg. Horn. c. 4.

[c] Siquidem & in Hebræis & Samaritanorum libris ita ſcriptum reperi. Et vixit Mathuſala, &c. Hieron. Quæſt. in Gen. vid. & Capell. Chron. Sacr.

6. The

6. The Son often reigning with the Father, his Reign is ſometimes put down as commencing from his Partnerſhip with his Father in the Kingdom, and in other places, from his reigning alone after his Father's deceaſe. Thus the difficulties are explained concerning the beginning of the Reigns of [d] *Jehoram* King of *Iſrael*, Son of *Ahab*, and *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, Son of *Jehoſaphat*, 2 Kings i. 17. iii. 1. For it is ſaid expreſly, that *Jehoſaphat being then King of Judah, Jehoram the Son of Jehoſaphat, King of Judah, began to reign*, 2 Kings viii. 16. It is likewiſe manifeſt, that *Jehoaſh*, the Son of *Jehoahaz*, King of *Iſrael*, muſt reign with his Father three Years, 2 *Kings* xiii. 1, 10. This is alſo applyed in the explication of other Queſtions by [e] St. *Jerom*. The Reign of *Azariah* is computed from his taking the Government upon himſelf at ſixteen Years of Age, in the 27th Year of *Jeroboam* King of *Iſrael*; for then he is ſaid to begin to reign, 2 *Kings* xv. 1. whereas his Father *Amaziah* lived but to the fifteenth Year of *Jeroboam*'s Reign, 2 *Kings* xiv. 17. In the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, there was a long *Interregnum* between *Jeroboam* the Second and *Zachariah*, 2 Kings xiv. 23. xv. 8. Some aſſign a threefold computation of the Years of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Reign, the firſt from his laying Siege to *Jeruſalem*, the ſecond from his taking it, and the beginning of the Captivity, the third from his entire Monarchy after the Conqueſt of *Egypt*. Others aſſign two beginnings of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Reign, the one from his coming with his

[d] Quod commodiùs explicari non poteſt, quàm illâ admiſſâ Hypotheſi, quæ eodem illo Anno 17. Jehoſaphati, Jehoramum ejus filium Judæ Proregem conſtitutum fuiſſe, ejúſque vicariæ poteſtatis Anno 2. (Jehoſaphati patris deſinente 18.) mortuo fratri Achaziæ ſucceſſiſſe in Regno Iſraelitico Jehoramum alterum, ex Prorege jam Regem factum. Cujus deinde ita regnantis Anno 5. Jehoramum quoque Judæ Proregem à vivente Patre Jehoſaphato, jam ſeniore, Regni factum fuiſſe conſortem, & quaſi ex Cæſare creatum Auguſtum. Uſſer. Chron. Sacr. p. 7.

[e] Hieron. ad Vital.

Army into *Syria*, during the Life of his Father, the other from his Father's Death.

7. The Terms of Time in Computation, are ſometimes taken incluſively, and at other times excluſively, *Matth.* xvii. 1. we read, *After ſix days Jeſus taketh Peter, James, and John his Brother, and bringeth them up into an high Mountain apart*; and in like manner, *Mark* ix. 2. But this is ſaid, *Luke* ix. 28. *to come to paſs about an eight days after*; which is very conſiſtent with what the other Evangeliſts write. For St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* ſpeak excluſively, reckoning the ſix days between the time of our Saviour's Diſcourſe, which they there relate, and his Transfiguration; but St. *Luke* includes the day in which he had that diſcourſe with his Diſciples, and the day of his Tranſfiguration, and reckons them with the ſix intermediate days. The [f] *Rabbins* alſo obſerve, that the very firſt day of a Year may ſtand in computation for that Year: and by this way of reckoning, miſtakes of Years *current* for Years *compleat*, or Years *compleat* for [g] Years *current*, in the ſucceſſions of ſo many Kings, and the Tranſactions of Affairs for ſo long a time, may amount to a conſiderable number of Years. For this reaſon [h] *Thucydides* ſays, he computes the Years of the *Peloponneſian* War, not by the Magiſtrates yearly choſen during that time, but by ſo many Summers and Winters: Whereas [i] *Polybius*, *Joſephus*, and *Plutarch*, have been thought to contradict themſelves, becauſe they ſometimes reckon by *current*, and ſometimes by *compleat* Years.

Theſe, and ſeveral other ways, by which Diſputes in Chronology may be occaſioned, are a ſufficient Argument to us, that they do not imply, that there were

[f] Lightf. *Harm. of the N. Teſt.* §. ix.

[g] Ἡμεῖς τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἴσως ἀγνοοῦμεν ἁπάντων τῶν ἐτῶν ἢ ἀριθμὸν, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀναγεγράφθαι ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις τὴν ἐπιγενόμενην μείωσιν ἢ ἡμέρας. Theoph. ad Eutolych. l. 3.

[h] Thucyd. lib. v. c. 20. [i] Ruald. in Plut. Animadv. 45.

originally

originally Chronological Miſtakes in the Books themſelves. And if they might ſo many ways ariſe without any Error in the Original Writings; if the ſame difficulties occur upon ſo very nice and intricate a Subject in all Books in the World, and it could be by no means neceſſary, that Books of Divine Authority ſhould be either at firſt ſo penned, as to be liable to no wrong Interpretations, or be ever after preſerved by Miracle from all corruption, it is great raſhneſs to deny the Divine Authority of the Scriptures upon the account of any difficulties in Chronology.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Obſcurity of ſome Places in the Scriptures, particularly of the Types and Propheſies.

HEre it muſt in the firſt place be remembred, that it has been a common and true obſervation, that all Authors are rather perplex'd and obſcured, than explained by a multitude of Commentators; and this is ſo true of no Book as of the Scriptures: for as none has had ſo many Gloſſes and Comments put upon it by Men of all Ages and Nations, ſo moſt of them endeavour to find out ſome new Explication, or to ſerve a Cauſe, and maintain ſome particular Opinions by their Expoſitions. So that it is a wonder that any part of the Scriptures ſhould be clear, after Volumes have been written, I may truly ſay, upon every Text, rather than that difficulties ſhould be found in them. But at the ſame time it muſt be acknowledged, that we find it declared in the Scriptures themſelves, that there are places of difficulty in them: which makes it but ſo much the more unreaſonable, that this ſhould be urged as an Objection againſt them. For what is acknowledged and profeſs'd, muſt be ſuppos'd to be

with a deſign, and for ſome good reaſon; and the reaſon and deſign ought to be inquired into, before this be uſed as an Objection. St. *Peter* ſpeaking of Chriſt's coming to Judgment, ſays, that St. *Paul* in his Epiſtles had delivered *ſome things hard to be underſtood*; and St. *Paul* himſelf intimates, that there had been miſtakes concerning what he had written in this matter, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 1, 2, 3. St. *Peter* on this occaſion ſays, that it ſo happened not only to St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, but to other Books of the Scriptures, thro' the ignorance and raſhneſs of *unlearned* and *unſtable* Men, that they were *wreſted* by them to *their own deſtruction*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. And it happens more eſpecially in thoſe places of Scripture, which are concerning things of this nature, or contain whatever Prophecies of things to come. Therefore I ſhall, I. give an account how it comes to paſs, that there are things hard to be underſtood in the Scriptures in general. II. I ſhall in particular conſider the obſcurity of Prophecies, and ſhall prove the certainty of the Types made uſe of by the Prophets, and ſhew that there is great force and evidence in the Arguments brought from them. III. I ſhall prove that the obſcurity of ſome places of the Scriptures is no prejudice to the Authority of them, nor to the end and deſign of them.

I. I ſhall give an account in general, how it comes to paſs, that there are ſome things in the Scriptures hard to be underſtood.

1. Some Doctrines, which it mightily concerns us to be acquainted withal, could not be delivered in ſo plain a manner, but that they muſt needs have great difficulties in them; as the Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity, of the Incarnation of Chriſt, of the Reſurrection, and of the Joys of Heaven and of the Torments of Hell. There are ſeveral things which we are capable of knowing, and which are neceſſary to be known, of which yet we cannot have ſo perfect and abſolute a knowledge, but that ſomething of them will ſtill

ſtill remain unknown to us. As there is no Object more viſible, or better known to us than the Sun is; but to calculate the dimenſions and the diſtance of the Sun from us, to know how its Light is communicated, and ſuddenly ſpread over the Face of the Earth, are things of great difficulty, and can never perhaps be fully accounted for: In like manner, what the Scriptures deliver to us concerning the Nature of God, and the ſtate of the World to come, muſt needs have difficulties in it, tho' we are never ſo well aſſured that there is a God, and a Future State, becauſe theſe are things above our Underſtandings: we may perfectly underſtand that there are ſuch things, but can have no full and clear conception of all that may be fit to be delivered to us concerning them. Nothing can be made plainer to us, than we are capable of knowing it, or than the Nature of it, and the proportion our Faculties bear to it, will allow. God being incomprehenſible, whatever is delivered concerning him, can never be without all difficulty; and whilſt we are in this World, we can never underſtand the ſtate of the next ſo fully, as we ſhall do hereafter. And theſe are difficulties which muſt be, unleſs the Nature of the things, or our own Nature were different from what it is.

Nevertheleſs, the greateſt Myſteries in the Chriſtian Religion, ſo far as they are revealed, and ſo far as they are required to be known by us, contain no inexplicable difficulties: but if we will needs know more of the Myſteries of Religion than is revealed, and more than is required to be known, no wonder if we meet with difficulties. What is meant, for inſtance, by the Doctrine of the Trinity, is capable of being very well underſtood, as the oppoſers of this Doctrine muſt own, unleſs they will confeſs, that they oppoſe they know not what. He that ſays a thing is not true, underſtands what it is which he pretends not to be true, if he knows what he ſays. The thing

then is known, tho' there be difficulties in the explication, but the explication concerns the manner of exiſtence, not the truth of it. For that may certainly be, and we may certainly know it to be, which yet we know not how it ſhould be. And the Doctrine it ſelf only is revealed, as neceſſary to be believed, not any particular explication of it. And if it can be proved, that this is the Doctrine of Scripture, and it be plain to be underſtood what is meant by this Doctrine, as it is delivered in Scripture, this ſhews the plainneſs of the Chriſtian Religion in all things neceſſary to Salvation, tho' divers things relating to this Doctrine be difficult to be explained, becauſe the Doctrine is intelligibly and plainly enough delivered, ſo far as it is required to be underſtood and believed.

Several Arts and Sciences, which are very difficult and abſtruſe in the Theory, are eaſie in the Practice, and a Man may very well underſtand what the *Theorem* it ſelf is, which is to be proved, tho' he be altogether uncapable of underſtanding the proof of it. Now, what God ſays, is as certain as any demonſtration can be, and what he has plainly delivered, is plain as well as certain; and it is never the leſs certain or plain, becauſe we cannot make out the proof of it, nor are able to underſtand how it can be. It is ſufficient that the Scriptures are plain in this Doctrine, ſo far as we are concerned to know it; it is not neceſſary that the Doctrine it ſelf ſhould be plain in all the Controverſies, which may be raiſed about it: when we know the meaning, we muſt take God's Word for the Truth of it. The manner of the diſtinction of Perſons, and the Unity of Eſſence in the Godhead, is not required to be believed, but the Thing, and we know the Thing to be ſo, becauſe God himſelf has ſaid it, tho' we can know nothing of the manner of it. We know the Propoſition, which is to be believed, tho' we cannot make good the Proof of it in the way of

of natural Reaſoning, but only from the Authority of the Revealer, which is of it ſelf ſufficient, and ought to be inſtead of all other Reaſons to us.

2. Some parts of the Scriptures were fitted and accommodated to former Ages, and were more proper and uſeful for them, than if they had been written in ſuch a manner, as to be leſs obſcure and difficult. We may well imagin, that many parts of the Scriptures muſt have been more peculiarly adapted to their uſe and advantage, for whom they were immediately deſigned: and the Learning and Wiſdom of ancient Times conſiſted in Parables and Proverbs and obſcure Forms of Speech, in *Prophecies*, in *Subtil* and *Dark Parables*, and in *the ſecrets of grave Sentences*, Eccl. xxxix. 1, 2, 3. And it was foretold of the *Meſſias* in particular, that he ſhould ſpeak in Parables, as a matter of great excellency. *I will open my mouth in a Parable, I will utter dark Sayings of old*, Pſal. lxxviii. 2. Matt. xiii. 35. This was in ancient Times the Language of Courts, and the propereſt way of Addreſs to Kings. *Nathan* the Prophet, and the Woman of *Tekoa*, came to *David* with a Parable, 2 *Sam.* xii. 1. xiv. 4. And *Jehoaſh*, King of *Iſrael*, ſent a Meſſage of the ſame nature to *Amaziah*, King of *Judah*, 2 Kings xiv. 9. and [a] *Cyrus* anſwers the Petition of two Nations at once to him, in a ſhort Parable. *To underſtand a Proverb, and the Interpretation, the Words of the Wiſe, and their dark Sayings*, was the beſt deſcription that *Solomon* himſelf could give of Wiſdom, *Prov.* i. 6. The Queen of *Sheba* came *to prove him with hard Queſtions*, 1 Kings x. i. And [b] *Solomon* and *Hiram* are related by *Joſephus*, to have propounded Problems and Riddles, or Parables to each other, upon condition of a Forfeiture to be paid by him, who could not explain the Riddle ſent him. This would be looked

[a] Herodot. lib. i. c. 141.
[b] Joſeph. Antiqu. lib. viii. c. 2. & Contr. Apion. lib. i.

upon now as a ſtrange correſpondence between Kings; but then it was otherwiſe thought of; many of their Epiſtles were preſerv'd, as he tells us, to his time at *Tyre*; and the Heathen Hiſtorians, whoſe Teſtimonies he produceth, thought it deſerv'd their particular Obſervation. This was that [c] *Prize of Wiſdom* between *Amaſis* King of *Ægypt*, and the King of *Æthiopia*, and it was cuſtomary among the ancient *Greeks*. This Cuſtom of propounding Riddles was as old as *Sampſon*'s time, *Judg*. xiv. 12. and Examples of the ſame nature are to be ſeen in *Herodotus* [d] and other Authors. Whether it be true or falſe that *Homer* died of Grief, becauſe he could not explain the Riddle of the Fiſhers, it ſhews that Riddles were in great requeſt amongſt the Ancient *Greeks*: for otherwiſe there could have been no ground either for the Truth or Fiction of ſuch a Story. *Plutarch* relates it, as the true Cauſe of *Homer*'s Death; and [e] no leſs is imply'd in the Oracle, which was written under *Homer*'s Statue in Braſs at *Delphi*: and when [f] *Herodotus* denies this, he owns the Report; and by the Verſes, which he ſays *Homer* ſpoke upon this occaſion, it appears what opinion *Homer* had of this ſort of Wit. *Heſiod* is by [g] *Quintilian* thought the Author of the Fables, which paſs under the Name of *Æſop*; however, this makes it probable that he did write Fables, and perhaps there were few Men of Learning and Note in thoſe times, who did not.

Mythology was in the higheſt eſteem amongſt the Ancients, and indeed all the Ancient Learning was of this kind. The *Ægyptians*, who were in great Reputation for Learning, deliver'd their Notions in Hieroglyphicks, as if they had reſolv'd not to be underſtood. And the Philoſophers of old, *Pythagoras*, *He-*

[c] Ἀμιλλα Σοφίας, Plut. Conviv. Sapient.
[d] Vid. Athenæ. l. x. c. 15, &c.
[e] Pauſan. Phocic. —— Ὅμα νέων παίδων αἴνισμα φύλαξαι.
[f] Herod. & Plut. in Vit. Homeri. [g] Quintil. Inſtitut. lib. v, c. xi.

raclitus,

raclitus, &c. greatly affected Obſcurity. *Socrates* himſelf, and *Plato*, and *Ariſtotle*, purpoſely conceal'd their Meaning in many caſes from vulgar Capacities: and *Thucydides* took the ſame courſe in his Hiſtory, and was obſcure out of deſign, as *Marcellinus* has obſerv'd in his Life. The Books of the Old Teſtament for the moſt part ſeem to have been the moſt plain, and the moſt eaſily intelligible, of any Writings of ancient times; and they could not have been more obvious, but they muſt have been contemptible and uſeleſs to thoſe for whom they were immediately deſign'd. The Precepts and Exhortations are always plain and obvious, and the Obſcurity of other things is ſo far from being an Exception to the Books of Scripture, that it was neceſſary, according to the Learning and Cuſtoms of ancient times.

The Parables of our Bleſſed Saviour are explain'd to us, and there can now be no Pretence of Obſcurity in them; and in his Diſcourſes with the *Jews*, to whom they were not explain'd, he alluded to thoſe Proverbs and Cuſtoms, which were beſt known and moſt in uſe among them, to whom upon any occaſion he ſpoke; that thereby all, who *had ears to hear*, and were not by their Sins hinder'd from attending to what they heard, might be the more affected with them, and the better inclined to give themſelves up to his Inſtructions, when they heard him make uſe of ſuch Alluſions, as they knew, according to the way of teaching amongſt them, had ſome excellent hidden Meaning, which they would be very deſirous to become acquainted withal.

3. Many places of Scripture, which are obſcure to us, were not obſcure in the Ages in which they were written.

(1.) Becauſe the Obſcurity for the moſt part is rather in the form and manner of Speech, than in the Notions themſelves; ſo that that might be clear at firſt, which is obſcure to us, who are but little acquainted

quainted with the Phraſes and Idioms of the Language, and the Eloquence of thoſe Times and Countries. For the Faſhions of Speech vary as much as thoſe of the Garb and Habit, and the Eloquence and ways of Expreſſion are as different, as the Dialects and Languages of divers Ages and Nations.

(2.) The Names of Animals, of Flowers and Plants and Minerals are very liable to be miſtaken, and eſpecially whatever is peculiar to any Country, muſt needs be difficult to be underſtood by Foreigners, who have no ſuch things among them, and perhaps want words to expreſs their Nature, and can ſcarce have a true and exact Notion of them. Synonymous Names of things may eaſily be miſtaken for different Species: In the Book of *Job*, five ſeveral Words are uſed, to ſignify a Lion, in two Verſes, *Job* iv. 10, 11. and in three other Verſes, Gold is mention'd under four diſtinct Names, *Job* xxviii. 15, 16, 17. And if all theſe Words did not occur in other places of Scripture, they might have been taken for five kinds of Animals, and four ſorts of Metals; which muſt ſometimes happen in a Language, of which there is ſo little extant, as of the *Hebrew* Tongue. The preciſe Value of Coins, and Proportion of Weights and Meaſures, uſed ſo long ago, and in Countries ſo far from ours, can hardly now be known, and muſt neceſſarily admit of great Variety of Opinions: there is much Uncertainty about theſe in all ancient Hiſtory, but the great Antiquity of the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory, above others, may make us reaſonably expect to find many more ſuch difficulties in it. It is Raſhneſs to pretend, that the Sum, which *David* left for the Building the Temple, is extravagant, (1 *Chron.* xxii. 14.) ſince no Man can now be certain of the Value or Weight of a Talent of Gold and of Silver, in *David*'s time. For the Weight and Valuation of Coins has, in different Ages, vary'd in all Countries. We read of a Talent of Lead, *Zech.* v. 7. which is but a piece of Lead of an uncertain

uncertain Weight or Value. And the ſame Word ſignifies a Piece or Loaf of Bread, *Exod.* xxix. 23. *Prov.* vi. 26. And the ſame Names of different Perſons or Places; or the different Names of the ſame Perſons, and of the ſame Places in the Scriptures, is another occaſion of Obſcurity. But thus it is in all Hiſtories of ancient times. The Mother of *Alexander* is mention'd by Hiſtorians under different Names: [h] *Plutarch* ſays, ſhe had three Names, and he obſerves in general, that divers Names of the ſame Perſons were the Cauſe of Confuſion in Hiſtory. The Names, Coins, Weights, and Meaſures, and Habits of ancient times, afford the greateſt Work for Criticks, which were ſo well known, when the Authors who mention them, wrote, that it had been ridiculous for them to explain them. Theſe are Difficulties of that nature, that they could not be avoided, but by the Care and Concernment of an extraordinary Providence, and they are of ſo little moment, that it could not be expected, that God ſhould particularly concern himſelf to prevent them.

(3.) The Penmen of the Scriptures, in their Proverbs or Parables, often allude to Cuſtoms, or to things, that happen'd in thoſe times, in which they liv'd, that were then commonly known, but being unknown now, may well make many places of their Writings obſcure to us, which were not ſo to thoſe of their own time. This is alledg'd as the Reaſon of the Obſcurity [i] of the Laws of the Twelve Tables among the *Romans*, at the diſtance of leſs than ſeven hundred years after their firſt being enacted. And

[h] Plut. de Pyth. Orac.

[i] Obſcuritates, inquit Sex. Cæcilius, non aſſignemus culpæ Scribentium, ſed inſcitiæ non aſſequentium: quanquam hi quoque ipſi, qui quæ ſcripta ſunt, minus percipiunt, culpa vacant. Nam longa ætas verba atque mores veteres obliteravit, quibus verbis moribuſque ſententia legum comprehenſa eſt. A. Gell. l. xx. c. 1.

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the [k] Ancient Interpreters long before confeſs'd their Ignorance in ſome parts of them, tho' the *Romans* made their Children learn theſe Laws by heart. But thus it is in all Books of Antiquity, eſpecially in ſuch Books as have frequent occaſion to hint at things ſo notorious, at the time when they were written, that it was needleſs to give any particular account of them. This has made Notes and Comments neceſſary upon all Ancient Books; and thoſe places need them moſt, which treat of things formerly ſo well known, that the Authors did not think fit to inſiſt upon them, but ſuppoſed them, and only alluded to them, rather than expreſs'd or explain'd them. For which reaſon, we owe the Informations which we have of the *Roman* Antiquities chiefly to *Greek* Authors, becauſe it had been abſurd for *Romans*, writing to Men of their own City and Nation, to acquaint them with the Cuſtoms of *Rome*, which they knew as well as themſelves; but thoſe things were proper for Foreigners to take notice of, for the Information of Foreigners. [l] *Pauſanias* writing under *Adrian* thought it requiſite to take notice, that the *Romans* were not denominated from their Fathers, after the manner of the *Greeks*, but each of them had at leaſt three Names. So little known to Strangers were the moſt obvious *Roman* Cuſtoms, even in that Age. But that, which was commendable in him, would have been hardly pardonable in a *Latin* Writer. And much of the Knowledge relating to the Cuſtoms among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, is rather owing to the Statues and other Figures and Monuments of Antiquity, than to any account given by ancient Authors. But the Jews being permitted to make no Images, we muſt be content to be ignorant of the things, which could be known to us only by theſe means. And whatever Alluſions, either in Parables or otherwiſe, are made to ſuch things, muſt needs be

[k] Cic. de Legib. l. ii. [l] Pauſan. Achaic. p. 213.

difficult

difficult to us, becauſe whatever is thus ſpoken with reference to any thing, can be known no better than the thing it ſelf; and that which ſerv'd for an Illuſtration at the firſt Writing, renders the Senſe obſcure, when the thing uſed for Illuſtration, becomes unknown. Nothing is more generally known than the Proverbial Sayings of a Nation, to the People of it; but there is nothing that needs more Explication to Foreigners. And theſe Sayings are very frequent both in the Diſcourſes of our Saviour, and throughout the whole Scriptures: for they are the moſt ſignificant and inſtructive way of Diſcourſe, and the moſt eaſily apprehended by ſuch as are uſed to them. The uſe of Proverbs is natural to all Nations, and they are the Reſult of the Experience and Obſervation of any People: So that the moſt effectual and readieſt way of Inſtruction is to apply theſe Sayings generally known and receiv'd, to particular caſes and occaſions. But then theſe commonly depend upon the Cuſtoms of a People, or upon ſome Hiſtory, or particular Accident, and oftentimes are taken up at firſt upon ſmall occaſions, and the Intention and Signification of them is apt to be forgotten, or miſtaken in future Ages, or by other Nations. And therefore all places of Scripture, expreſs'd in Allegorical or Proverbial Forms of Speech, or by Types and Reſemblances of things, muſt needs have been better underſtood in thoſe times, when they were written, than they are now, becauſe we have but an imperfect Notion of many things, to which the Alluſion is made, or from whence the Similitude is taken, and the very thing which makes them now obſcure to us, made them the more plain and intelligible to them, who liv'd at the time of their being written.

(4.) *Maimonides* [m] lays this down as a fundamental Rule for the Explication of the Scripture, that we

[m] Maim. More Nevoch. Præf.

ſhould

ſhould attend to the main Scope and Deſign of Parables, and not inſiſt upon every Word and Circumſtance, which is added to make them more Natural, but not as any neceſſary part of them. And in thoſe Ages, when Prophecies were ſo frequent, and Types and Allegories ſo conſtantly made uſe of, they had certain Rules and Methods [n] of Interpretation, as we learn from *Joſephus*, which through length of time, and the Corruption of ſucceeding Ages are now loſt. And it is certain, that the *Jews* in the time of our Saviour and his Apoſtles were often confuted and ſilenced by them with the Application of Types and Prophecies, which were then acknowledg'd to belong to the *Meſſias*, and were ever ſo underſtood by the *Jews*, but would ſcarce be underſtood ſo by us, if we did not find them thus interpreted and apply'd.

We ſee then, that the Obſcurity of many places of Scripture, proceeds from the length of time, and other Accidents, and that therefore it could not be prevented, unleſs God ſhould make a New Revelation to every Age and Nation of the World: which yet would be of little effect to thoſe, who will not be convinced nor perſuaded by that Revelation which we have in the Scriptures. Though the Scriptures were deſign'd for the Benefit and Inſtruction of all Ages and Nations, yet they often had a more direct and immediate Regard to the Age and Nation, in which they were firſt penn'd. We have nothing left but the Names of moſt of the Hiſtorians, mention'd by S. *Jerom* as neceſſary to be read in order to explain the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and many Objections made againſt the Scriptures would have no Pretence, if we knew the Circumſtances of Affairs, and had a complete Hiſtory of thoſe times, to which they relate; but God having given us full evidence, that the Scriptures are written by his Appointment and Direction, expects

[n] Joſeph. Bell. Jud. lib. iii. c. 14.

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to be believed upon his word, and has not thought fit to gratifie the curioſity of Men, who will disbelieve it. And if Men will uſe any tolerable care and diligence, the Senſe and Importance of the Scriptures may be ſo far underſtood as is needful, in all Times, whatever difficulties there may be in ſome particular Paſſages.

II. I ſhall conſider more particularly the obſcurity of Prophecies, and ſhall ſhew what certainty there is in the Types made uſe of by the Prophets.

1. As for any differences, which are to be met with in the Interpretation of Prophecies, they may proceed partly from the Infirmities and Paſſions of humane Nature, by which it comes to paſs, that when Men undertake to write upon any Subject, they are ſeldom ſatisfied with what others have ſaid before them, but are for ſeeking out ſome new Interpretation of their own: And partly from the difficulty of fixing the particular and preciſe time of Actions. But this is no more an Objection againſt Prophecies, than it is againſt the Truth of all Hiſtory; and we may as well conclude, that things never came to paſs, becauſe learned Men differ about the time of their being done, as that they were never propheſied of, for the ſame reaſon. Expoſitors may differ in the niceties of the Chronological part, but in the main they are agreed, and whoever will be at the pains to conſult them, may be greatly confirmed in the Truth of the Prophecies, upon this very conſideration, that there is leſs difference in the explication of the principal Prophecies, than there is in the Comments upon moſt Hiſtories; and that thoſe who differ in other matters, muſt have the greater evidence for that in which they do agree. Tho' there be ſome difficulty and variety of Opinion in the calculation of the preciſe time, when ſome Prophecies were fulfilled, becauſe it is diſputed where the computation is to begin, or how ſome other circumſtance is to be underſtood; yet all Expoſitors are agreed, concerning theſe very

Prophecies, that they are fulfilled. For inſtance; it is certain, that the Scepter is departed from *Judah*, whether that Prophecy be to be underſtood of the Tribe of *Judah*, or the *Jewiſh* Nation denominated from that Tribe; it is certain, that the City and Sanctuary are deſtroyed, and the Sacrifice and Oblation taken away, tho' Interpreters do not agree about the preciſe time and manner of the accompliſhment of every particular. Plain Matter of Fact ſhews, that the Prophecy is fulfilled, and there is no difficulty but about a Circumſtance; and to doubt of the fulfilling of Prophecies, becauſe we do not certainly know the exact time when every particular was fulfilled, tho' we certainly know that they muſt have been all long ſince fulfilled, is as unreaſonable as if a Man ſhould queſtion the Truth of Hiſtory upon the account of Uncertainties in Chronology. What Man doubts whether there were ſuch a Man as *Homer*, becauſe it is uncertain when he lived? or, whether there ever were a *Trojan* War, becauſe the time of the taking of *Troy* has been variouſly determined? And yet, is there not as much reaſon to reject this, or any other Hiſtory, which has occaſioned diſputes in point of Time, as there can be to doubt of the truth of *Daniel*'s Predictions, concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, becauſe there may be Matter of Controſie in explaining his *ſeventy Weeks?* The Prophecy it ſelf is plain, and the Accompliſhment certain, however Men may differ in aſſigning the Epocha of Time. Hiſtory relates what has come to paſs, and Prophecy foretels what ſhall come, and our uncertainty in point of Time no more affects the Credibility of the one than of the other. We may be uncertain of the time foretold by the Prophet, and as uncertain of the time mentioned by the Hiſtorian; but when all other Circumſtances agree, there is no reaſon why our uncertainty, as to the ſingle Circumſtance of Time, ſhould be alledged againſt the Credibility of either of them.

them. But the Obscurity arising from the difficulties in Chronology, is spoken of in the former Chapter.

2. Some Prophecies were purposely obscure, because they did not so nearly concern the Age, in which they were delivered, but were designed not so much for the information of preceding Ages, as for the confirmation of Posterity in the Truth of Religion, when they should see them fulfilled. God doth not send Revelations to gratifie the curiosity of Men, in acquainting them with what shall befal their Posterity, but rather conceals the knowledge of future Events from Men, because the knowledge of them might have an ill effect, in making them proud, or careless and negligent; or else too sollicitous and concerned about what was to befal their Posterity. The Judgments and Afflictions of Parents would be so much abated, if they had a clear prospect of the Happiness of their Posterity, that they would lose that effect, which God designs by sending his Judgments. And a perfect view of the Miseries, which were to befal the Posterity of the most happy Parents, would render the Blessings of God the less Blessings to them. So that both the Rewards and Punishments of this Life would very much lose their force and effect, if Prophecies were less obscure than they are. It is a sufficient reason for the obscure and mysterious delivering of some Prophecies, that they thereby serve to prove the Faith and Patience, and excite the Care and Watchfulness of Men: for which reason, the Day of Judgment, and the Day of every Man's Death, is concealed from us, because the particular and distinct Revelation of these things, would cause Security in some, and Despair in others; and the case is the same as to the destruction of Churches and Nations: We are commanded to Watch and Pray, *Watch ye therefore, lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping; and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch,* Mark xiii. 35. Which

in the direct ſenſe of the words concerns *Jeruſalem*, but the reaſon of them will extend to the deſtruction of any other City, or to any other Judgment which God has foretold, but has concealed the time, or other circumſtances, either by ſilence, or by uncertain and myſterious Forms of Speech. A full proſpect of Proſperity to come, oftentimes has proved fatal to Men; *Jeroboam*, *Hazael*, and *Jehu*, were the worſe probably for the Declarations made to them; as *Achithophel*, if it had been foretold plainly what would befal him, would, in all likelihood, ſooner have haſtened his own Death. Whether therefore the Event be good or bad, and whether it concern our ſelves or our Poſterity, it is fit, moſt times, that it ſhould not be clearly revealed to us, becauſe this would, in great meaſure, exclude the exerciſe of the Graces of Faith, and Hope, and Patience in Men, under their preſent Condition. And at the time of fulfilling the Prophecies, which are now moſt obſcure, ſuch a continued Train and Series of Affairs, with all their Circumſtances and Particularities, may appear in ſo full and undeniable Evidence, as may convince Infidels, and confirm Believers in the truth of the Predictions, and of the Religion taught by the Prophets, by whom the Events were foretold.

3. Obſcurity was neceſſary in ſome Prophecies, as the [o] Fathers obſerve, becauſe, without a conſtant Miracle to preſerve them, they would otherwiſe have been loſt, and would never have been delivered down to Poſterity. Of this Nature are ſome of thoſe Prophecies, which relate to our Saviour's ſtate of Humiliation, his Poverty, and Crucifixion, and Death, to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the rejection of the *Jews*, which, by the Circumſtances, are manifeſt to us in the Accompliſhment, but were written with ſome

[o] Juſt. Mart. Dial. Irenæ. l. 3. c. 24. Euſeb. Dem. Evang. l. 6. Proæm. Chryſ. in Iſai. vii. Theodoret. in Ezek. Præt.

obſcurity

obſcurity to conceal them from the obſtinate and malicious *Jews*, that *ſeeing they might ſee and not perceive:* for if they had fully underſtood the ſcope and importance of them, they would have endeavoured rather to have ſuppreſſed and deſtroyed them, than they would have ſuffered them to remain to be urged againſt themſelves: A People who were ſo wholly poſſeſſed with the Notion and Expection of a Temporal *Meſſias*, would have rejected thoſe Prophecies which ſet forth his Humiliation and Crucifixion, if they had been expreſſed in plainer terms. They would have ſpared Chriſt no more in the Prophecies of him than in his Perſon.

Again, Obſcurity was neceſſary, becauſe ſome Events could never have been brought to paſs, if they had been expreſly and in plain terms foretold, unleſs God would have forced Men to the Accompliſhment of his Predictions, which muſt have taken away the Liberty of Humane Actions. For Men would ſcarce have ventured upon ſuch Actions, as they knew before-hand muſt end in Affliction and great Calamity, and perhaps in the ruin of themſelves, or of their Families or Nation; and yet it may be neceſſary, that theſe things ſhould come to paſs, for the wiſe Ends of Providence, and for the Good and Salvation of Mankind. Few would have ſhewn that Courage and Reſolution, which St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* did in preaching the Goſpel, if they had been told ſo long before, as St. *Peter* was, that it muſt end in Martyrdom, or if the Holy Ghoſt had witneſſed in every City concerning them, as he did of St. *Paul*, ſaying in expreſs terms, that *Bonds and Afflictions did abide him*; moſt other Men would have been *moved*, tho' he was not, by *any of theſe things*, Acts xx. 23. For we find, that the Diſciples, upon this account, were earneſt with him not to go up to *Jeruſalem*. So difficult is it for the beſt Men in the beſt cauſe, to reſolve to meet certain and apparent Dangers. The nature therefore of

ſome things requires, that they ſhould not be more particularly deſcribed in the Prophecies concerning them. For either they muſt have been obſcurely ſpoken of, or elſe they could not have been propheſied of at all; becauſe, if they had been clearly foretold, they could never have come to paſs; which implies a contradiction: for it is impoſſible, that what God declares by his Prophets ſhould not be fulfilled. If all that was to befal the Church of Chriſt had been ſet down with the circumſtances of Time, and Place, and Perſons, by St. *John* in the *Revelation*, ſo as to prevent the Objections of thoſe, who except againſt the obſcurity of that Book, this certainly would have proved a great diſcouragement to many Chriſtians in the performance of their Duty, and muſt have hindred the bringing to paſs the Events, unleſs God ſhould have over-ruled the Minds of Men, and forced them upon acting, which had been to deprive them of their Freedom of Will.

4. If Prophecies had punctually foretold the things to be fulfilled in all their Circumſtances, Men would have purpoſely contrived to frame their Actions in ſuch a manner, as to appear to fulfil many of them; and whenever they had been fulfilled, it might have been ſuppoſed to have been by deſign and contrivance. Which would have been only to act a part, or live by a Rule and Pattern deſcribed and ſet before them; but when the obſcurity is ſuch, that they become fulfilled without any intention or knowledge of the Perſon employed in fulfilling them, this manifeſts the Wiſdom and Providence of God. If Prophecies had been leſs obſcure, Men would have been the more prone, to venture upon the commiſſion of ſin in order to fulfil them. We find by experience, how apt all Enthuſiaſts, and ſuch as perſuade themſelves that they have a clear and perfect knowledge of the obſcureſt Prophecies, are, to think any thing lawful to be done, which may bring about thoſe Events, that they

they fancy to be the Accompliſhment of them. And if the Events of all Prophecies had been concealed under no obſcurity of words and circumſtances, but had been obvious and viſible to every Reader, the number of ſuch Undertakers would have been much greater: for it is a hard matter to make Men diſtinguiſh between the accompliſhment of Prophecies, and the ſin which is often committed in the accompliſhment of them; but when they can ſerve their Intereſt by it, they are willing to believe the worſt Actions lawful, which may fulful a Prophecy; and the clearer Prophecies had been, the more occaſion and pretence had been given to ſuch deluſions, to which none are now ſubject, but ſuch as think them clear, and perſuade themſelves, or would perſuade others, that they throughly underſtand them.

5. Another reaſon is, that ſometimes a Prophecy may be delivered obſcurely, in mercy to the Inſtruments, who are to bring about the Event foretold by it. For God foreſeeing that ſome Men, notwithſtanding the cleareſt Revelations, would perſiſt in their Wickedneſs, and become inſtrumental in accompliſhing the Prediction, may in mercy to them forbear to diſcover the particulars of the Event, leſt this ſhould add to their guilt, and prove a great aggravation both of their Crime and Puniſhment. Our Saviour, tho' *he knew from the beginning who it was that ſhould betray him*, yet concealed it, till his laſt Supper, and then diſcovered it to *Judas* in the mildeſt manner, to move him to Repentance, if he had not hardned himſelf againſt it; not to make him deſperate upon the diſcovery of ſo wicked a Deſign.

Again, other Prophecies may be hid in obſcurity for a judgment upon thoſe who are obſtinate, and will not make a due uſe of the means afforded them of Salvation, but harden their Hearts, and reſolve to continue impenitent againſt all the methods which God has been pleaſed to uſe to reclaim them. For of ſuch

our Saviour gives this reaſon, why he ſpoke to them in Parables, *that ſeeing they might ſee and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not underſtand, leſt at any time they ſhould be converted, and their ſins ſhould be forgiven them*, Mark iv. 12. For when God has both by Miracles and other Prophecies, unqueſtionably clear and plain, admoniſh'd and forewarn'd 'em of the folly and danger of their Ways, and they will take no notice of it, but reject his Revelations, and affront his Mercy, it is very juſt for him to deny them that farther Declaration and Manifeſtation of his Will and Power, which might effectually produce a true Faith in 'em, and bring 'em to Repentance, eſpecially when the obſcurity of Prophecies may be conducing to the methods of his Providence, and to his gracious deſigns of Mercy towards other Men, who have not ſtood out in ſo bold a defiance of his other Declarations of himſelf. God *endureth with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth:* and therefore the obſcurity of Prophecies may be in mercy to ſome, to prevent the aggravation of their Sins, and for a judgment upon others to harden them.

6. *It is the Glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honour of Kings is to ſearch out a matter*, Prov. xxv. 2. The obſcurity of Prophecies may be deſigned to abate the confidence, and confound the pride of ſome, and to provoke the diligence and induſtry of others. For as ſome Men care to be at no pains to attain the moſt uſeful and neceſſary knowledge, ſo others deſpiſe all that is obvious, and have no ſatisfaction in the knowledge of ſuch things, as are eaſily known by others as well as themſelves. And this ſeems not only to have been the temper of thoſe Ages, in which the Scriptures were written, when Learning conſiſted in Types and Parables, and in dark and intricate Diſcourſes, but it has been the ſtudy and delight of learned Men in moſt Ages ſince, and of many Men in all Ages, to

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search into hidden and difficult Truths. [p] St. *Jerom* extols the *Revelation* of St. *John* for the Obscurity and hidden Sense of it; as [q] *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, had done long before him. In those Ages, it seems, it was no Objection, but the highest Character that could be given of the *Revelation*, to say that it was difficult to be understood. The Wisdom of God therefore, in condescension to all sorts of Men, and to fit the Scriptures for the use and benefit of all Capacities and Dispositions, has caus'd some of the Prophecies to be plain and obvious to all Readers, and others to be so deliver'd as to employ the pious and humble Labours of the most Learned and Inquisitive, to keep them in perpetual Dependence upon God for his Grace and Assistance in the Explication of the Scriptures; and at the same time to take down the vain Curiosity and Pride of such, as little concern themselves about the plain things of the Law, but are wholly busied in unfolding hidden things, and in pretending to *understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge*. The Curse denounc'd against Man, upon his Fall, was, that with Labour and Sweat he should eat the Fruits of the Ground, as his Punishment, for having eaten the forbidden Fruit: and it was but just with God to punish the Curiosity of Men after forbidden Knowledge, which occasion'd his Fall, with making the Attainment of Knowledge more difficult.

If the Scriptures were all obscure, they would be of little use; if they were all obvious, they would be despised. For if Obscurity be made an Objection by some, their Plainness and Simplicity is objected by others; but God has so order'd and proportion'd the several parts of them, that no Man may have just

[p] Apocalypsis Joannis tot habet sacramenta, quot verba parum dixi pro merito voluminis, laus omnis inferior est in verbis singulis multiplices latent intelligentiæ. Hieron. ad Paulin. Epist.

[q] Καὶ ὑπ' ἀποδοκιμάζω ταῦτα, ἃ μὴ σωεώρακα· θαυμάζω δ' μᾶλλον, ὅτι μὴ ϗ εἶδον. Apud Euseb. Hist. l. 7. c. 25.

cauſe to complain, that he doth not underſtand enough for his Salvation; nor any Man caſt them aſide, or read them with little Care and Diligence, ſince there are ſo many things in them, which may require the utmoſt Study and Pains of the moſt judicious and learned Men.

7. There is no Prophet ſo obſcure, but ſome Prophecies are very plainly deliver'd by him, which we know to have been fulfill'd; and this is a Warrant and Aſſurance to us of his Miſſion, and that we ought to rely upon it, that whatever he has deliver'd concerning other things will as certainly come to paſs; and in the mean time, before they come to paſs, or are throughly underſtood, they are exceeding uſeful in the Church. The *Revelation* of St. *John* is hard to be apply'd to particular Events, becauſe it comprehends ſo vaſt a Series of Time, in which long courſe of years many Events may be exactly alike at different times and in different places, and there may be a gradual and repeated Accompliſhment of ſome of his Prophecies. But the time was at hand for the fulfilling of other of theſe Prophecies, *Rev.* i. 3. xxii. 6, 7, 10, 12. and we know they have been fulfill'd in the ſeven Churches, *Rev.* ii. 5, 16, 22, 23. iii. 3, 16. which are propoſed for Examples to all others. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches*, Rev. ii. 7. The ſeven Churches are ſpoken to by Name, and what is ſaid to them, having been fulfill'd, is a certain Argument, that the reſt, which concerns all other Churches, ſhall be fulfill'd in its due time, tho' it be not perhaps yet underſtood.

But the obſcureſt Prophecies, even before their Accompliſhment, are of perpetual and ineſtimable uſe to us. It is acknowledg'd by all, that Parables are very proper and fit for Inſtruction, and therefore in ancient times their Doctrines were wont to be deliver'd in that way; becauſe it is a more familiar and eaſy Method of teaching than by Rules, and Precepts, and

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Rational Discourse, without that Illustration which is given to them by supposing a particular case. For then every one is apt to make the case his own, when he sees the Precepts reduced to Example, and cloath'd with Circumstances, and brought home, as it were, to his very Senses, which before lay more out of Sight, in abstract Notions and Speculative Discourse. And if feign'd cases be so much more effectual than bare Precepts or Exhortations, an infallible account of the state of the Church in all Ages, tho' we cannot point out the particular times and places, when and where every thing shall come to pass, must needs be of inestimable value and Benefit.

To *hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*, to observe what Errors and Faults are reproved, and what Vertues and Graces are commended and encouraged in the seven Churches of *Asia*; the Praises and Adorations, *chap.* iv. and the Bliss of the Righteous, the Joys of Heaven, and the Rewards of Martyrs, *chap.* vii. the Terrors of the Great and Dreadful day, *chap.* vi. the great Apostacy that was to be upon the Earth, *chap.* xiii. the Patience and Faith of the Saints, and the Resurrection of the Dead, *chap.* xx. the Description of the New *Jerusalem*, and the Glory and Happiness of the City of God, *chap.* xxi, xxii. These are the Subject of St. *John*'s *Revelation*, and are things of the greatest use and importance. We have the state and condition of the Chuch in all Ages presented to our view, tho' we are not able to mark out the particular times and seasons meant in the several parts of the Prophecy. And this is at least of the same use to us that all History is, and besides may be of as much more benefit, as it more nearly concerns us: for we do not know but that we may be fallen into the worst times there propheſy'd of. *Here is the patience, and the faith of the Saints.* We see the Care and Providence of God over his Church, the wonderful Deliverances which he is pleas'd to work for it, the Supports which

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he affords his faithful Servants under Perſecutions, and the Rewards prepar'd for them, and the final Deſtruction of the Enemies of God and Religion; theſe things are viſible in the *Revelation*, and it cannot be deny'd, but theſe are of excellent uſe, to yield us Comfort in the worſt of Troubles, and to excite Faith and Hope, and Patience, and all Chriſtian Graces in the Minds of Men. The *Revelation* of St. *John* may be look'd upon as an Hiſtory of the Church without any Chronology annext to it; but will any Man ſay, that the exacteſt and trueſt Hiſtory, that can be penn'd, of the moſt important Affairs, and ſuch as concern all Mankind, is of little value or conſequence to the Conduct and Management of our Lives, unleſs we were likewiſe acquainted with the particular time, and the Names of the Places and Perſons deſcribed in it? It is as much as our Salvation is worth, to be inform'd of a Future Judgment, though we are not told when it ſhall be; and that Book which ſets Rewards and Puniſhments, Heaven and Hell before us, is of the greateſt Advantage for the Edification and Salvation of Men, though the ſeveral Circumſtances and Particularities deſcribed, are unknown to us.

8. Tho' the Arguments from Types are, above all, apt to be look'd upon as uncertain, and to depend rather upon the Conjectures and Fancies of Men, than upon any clear Evidence: Yet we ſhall find the contrary, if we do but a little conſider the Nature of them. A *Type* is a Likeneſs, a Form, or Mould, (as the word ſignifies) and where the *Antitype* repreſented by it, and prefigur'd, anſwers exactly to it, there is no more queſtion to be made, but that the one belongs to the other, than there is reaſon to doubt, when we ſee an Impreſſion made upon Wax, what kind of Seal it was by which it was made; Or, when we ſee a good Picture of one we know, to enquire who ſat for it. A Type is much of the ſame Nature in Actions or Things and Perſons, as an Allegory is in Words:

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but Allegories are oftentimes ſo plain, that no Man can well miſtake what is meant by them. And thus it is as to Types in many caſes: Indeed, where there is but one Type or one Reſemblance, it is not ſo eaſily diſcern'd; but where many concur, he muſt be very wilful that does not acknowledge the Agreement. When an Author, as it often happens, deſcribes the Perſons of his own Time under feign'd Names, a Reader who knows nothing of it, may perhaps overlook one or two Characters, ſuppoſing them to be by chance; but when he perceives that they all exactly agree to ſo many ſeveral Perſons whom he knows, he no longer doubts of the Author's Deſign; eſpecially, when he obſerves the ſame Perſons deſcribed in divers Places, and different ways, according to their Condition and Circumſtances of Life, and their Qualifications of Body and Mind. And when many Types concur in the ſame Perſon, with a great number of Particularities, any two of which perhaps never concurr'd in any one Man before; as in the Perſon of our Saviour theſe things concurr'd, that he was compell'd to carry his Croſs, as *Iſaac* had carry'd the Wood; that he was lifted up, and faſtned to it, as the Brazen Serpent had been lifted up in the Wilderneſs; that as the Bones of the Paſchal Lamb were not broken, ſo not a Bone of him was broken when the Bones of thoſe were, who were crucify'd with him; and that he was crucify'd at the very time when the Paſchal Lamb was to be ſacrific'd: when ſo many different Circumſtances concur, which have no Dependence one upon another, nor upon the Will of Him, in whom they concur, but proceed from the Will (and as in this caſe) from the Malice of others; if theſe things meet by chance, it muſt be a very extraordinary and unaccountable Chance indeed, and much ſuch another as that was, which ſome would perſuade us made the World; it muſt be ſuch a Chance as never happen'd before, nor will ever happen again. But muſt not

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theſe Men rather ſpeak and think by chance, who can argue at this rate?

Sometimes the Characters are ſo lively, that the Types are as evident as expreſs Words could have made them; as when in the Deſcription of the Kingdom of Chriſt, he is ſtyled *David*, becauſe, as he was prefigur'd by *David*, ſo he was to deſcend from him, *Jer.* xxx. 9. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24, 25. *Hoſ.* iii. 5. ſeveral Deſcriptions which were Metaphorical in reference to the Perſons immediately concern'd in them, were literally fulfill'd in our Saviour: Thus the Gall and Vinegar, the Caſting of Lots upon the Garments, and the Piercing of the Hands and Feet are Metaphorical Expreſſions, of great Contempt and Cruelty uſed towards the Perſons to whom they were at firſt apply'd; but in their ultimate End and Deſign, they were true to their very Letter. And where there is thus a two-fold Signification of any place of Scripture, the one improper and Metaphorical, the other proper and Literal; the Perſon deſcrib'd in Metaphorical Terms is as clearly a Type of him, from whoſe real Condition and Circumſtances the Metaphor is taken, as a Metaphor is a Repreſentation of the plain Senſe contain'd under it.

The Legal Diſpenſation was all Typical, and ſo the *Jews* ever underſtood it to be; which made the Apoſtles diſpute with them from the Types of their Law, as they ſurely would never have done, if it had not on all ſides been agreed, that it was a proper way of Argument. Their Prophecies were given out in Actions as well as in Words; and as the Mind either of God or Man may be expreſs'd as fully by Actions, as by the plaineſt Words; ſo certainly we muſt acknowledge this to be the caſe, when Types ſo evidently denote the Perſon, and ſo properly belong to him, as to declare and beſpeak him to be the Man, in ſuch a manner that we ſhould conclude, that any Perſon of our own Times muſt needs be meant by any Author,

Author, who ſhould thus deſcribe him in a Book, the Deſign whereof was known to be, to make ſuch Deſcriptions. It is not indeed every Reſemblance which we may conclude from, but where many Types concur in the ſame Perſon, where the concurrence depends wholly upon the Will of his Adverſaries, or not in the leaſt upon his own Will; when theſe Types were alledged from a Diſpenſation, which was all along held to be Typical; in this caſe they may be urged, and as ſafely relyed upon as any other Argument.

III. In the laſt place, I am to ſhew that the obſcurity of the Scriptures is not ſuch as to be any prejudice to their Authority, nor to the End and Deſign of them. And the reaſon of this is implied by St. *Peter*, when he ſays, that there are but *ſome things hard to be underſtood* in the Scriptures, and the reſt are plain and obvious. All things neceſſary to Salvation are ſufficiently clear in the Scripture; and tho' there be other things in them which are obſcure, yet we ſee that Reaſons may be given (and perhaps many more, and better, than I am able to produce) why they are and ought to be ſo. God ſupplies us in Neceſſaries with a bountiful and open Hand; and what is not neceſſary, he ſurely may diſcover more ſparingly, and more obſcurely to us. It is ſo in the things of this Life: Our Senſes ſeldom or never fail us in things neceſſary to our Life and Health, tho' in other things we find our ſelves miſled by them; every Country and Place affords the Neceſſaries of Life; and that which is moſt rare, is always leaſt neceſſary; it may be uſeful, but yet we may very well be without it. Now to complain that all places of Scripture are not intelligible by all, is, as if we ſhould blame Providence for not making all Men rich, and all Countries like the Land of *Canaan*; it is a ſign we are reſolved to find fault, and never to be ſatisfied with what we have, unleſs we be humoured in every thing. But we

ſhould do well firſt to conſider, how we can expect this at God's Hands, or how well we have deſerved it of Him. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant*, Pſal. xxv. 14. *For the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his Secret is with the Righteous*, Prov. iii. 32. There are Secrets and Myſteries in Religion, which cannot be ſuppoſed to be known to any but thoſe, who are throughly acquainted with the plainer Doctrines, both in the ſtudy and the practice of them; and therefore if no ſuch Reaſons as have been now offered, could be given for the obſcurity of the Scriptures in ſome places, it would be unreaſonable, however, for ſuch Men as make this an Objection, to urge it; they have no right to object, whatever others may have; becauſe they have never uſed the means to know whether the Scriptures are ſo obſcure, as they pretend, or not. But they will never be able to prove, that if things neceſſary both in Faith and Practice be clearly ſet down, there may not be other things delivered which are *hard* to *be underſtood*, and which thoſe may *wreſt to their own Deſtruction*, who are *unlearned* and *unſtable*; that is, who have neither Learning and Skill enough to judge of ſuch Matters, nor yet Conſtancy and Stedfaſtneſs enough in the Faith, to adhere to what they do underſtand, and not to perplex themſelves, and ſuffer themſelves to be perverted by judging raſhly of things above their Capacity.

The unlearned and unſtable only are ſaid to wreſt the Scriptures to their own Deſtruction: And tho' it is not in the power and capacity of every Man to be Wiſe and Learned, yet it is in every one's power not to be unſtable, but conſtant and ſtedfaſt to what he underſtands, and never to depart from it for any By-ends or Reſpects. Let us learn what is eaſie to be known, and practiſe what we know, before we complain that the Scriptures are obſcure. Let us ſtudy and practiſe the Scriptures more, and this Objection will not appear

pear ſo formidable. But the truth is, thoſe that moſt uſe it, neither ſtudy nor practiſe them. And yet, after all their pretences of obſcurity, they have a greater quarrel againſt the plain parts of Scripture than againſt the obſcure ones; they know many places of Scripture which are plainly againſt them, and this makes them ſet themſelves againſt all the reſt.

What has been here ſaid in general, I hope may be, in ſome meaſure, uſeful to thoſe who deſire to read the Scriptures, for their Inſtruction and Edification; and in particular difficulties, Books muſt be conſulted, or ſuch Men as may be ſuppoſed to underſtand them. But no Man in common reaſon, ſhould have recourſe to the Enemies of revealed Religion for the explication of any Difficulties in it. Who ever [r] expected from an Adverſary of *Ariſtotle*'s, a true explication of the obſcure and difficult parts of his Works? Or, what Man would learn the Geometry of *Archimedes* from *Epicurus*, who ſet himſelf to diſpute againſt it, but never underſtood it? As for all that are fond of Objections, and read the Scriptures only in ſearch of them, it cannot be expected that Diſcourſes of this Nature ſhould ſignifie much with them. *Teach us, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes, and we ſhall keep it unto the End. Give us Underſtanding, and we ſhall keep thy Law: Yea, we ſhall keep it with our whole Heart. Great is the Peace, that they have who love thy Law, and they are not offended at it,* Pſal. cxix. 33, 34, 165.

[r] Auguſt. de Utilitat. Credend. c. 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Places of Scripture which ſeem to contradict each other.

I. THough the ſacred Writers no where contradict themſelves, or one another, yet they were not ſolicitous to prevent the being ſuſpected to do ſo by injudicious and raſh Men, as they would have been very cautious of giving any pretence for ſuch a Suſpicion, if they had written any thing but Truth. It could not be agreeable to the Sovereign Wiſdom and Majeſty of God to comply with the Humours and Fancies of Men; but rather, when he had, by an infallible Guidance and Direction, prevented the Penmen of the Holy Scriptures from writing any thing but Truth, to ſuffer them to write ſo, as that they might be liable to the Exceptions of the Wilful and Perverſe. Becauſe it is more [a] ſuitable to the ſimplicity of Truth, not to be over-nice and ſolicitous about every Punctilio and ſmaller Circumſtance; but to ſpeak fully and intelligibly, and then to leave it to Men, whether they will believe or not; eſpecially in what is told them for their own Advantage, the Relators having no end or deſign to ſerve by it, but only to do them the greateſt Good they can; and bringing all the evidence for their Conviction, that Miracles and Prophecies can afford, which are the only Means of God's revealing himſelf to Mankind; and then ſuffering in Teſtimony of what they have delivered.

[a] Multum enim refert, ut eſt in Epiſtola Adriani, quam recitat Calliſtratus L. Teſtium D. De Teſtibus, qui ſimpliciter viſi ſunt dicere, utrum unum eundemque meditatum ſermonem attulerint, an ad ea, quæ interrogati ſunt, ex tempore veriſimilia reſponderint. Grot. in Adject. ad Dan. c. xiii. 51.

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Thus our Saviour, when, notwithſtanding all his mighty Works, many would not believe in him, but queſtioned his Authority, and reviled his Perſon, and blaſphemed the Holy Spirit, by which they were wrought, was not concerned to work more Miracles, merely for the Satisfaction, or rather at the captious Demands of theſe Men, when they required him to do it. For if they would be convinced by any reaſonable means, he had given it them; if they would not, it would be to their own prejudice, he was not ſolicitous what they thought of him. And thus it is likewiſe in the Government of the World; God has given Men ſufficient evidence of his Being and Providence; but if Men will disbelieve his Providence, and deny his Being, he doth not vouchſafe by any immediate and particular Act of his Power to confute their pretences. And if, becauſe of ſome places that are difficult in the Scriptures, Men will reject the whole, rather than be at the pains to ſearch out the true meaning of theſe places, or than be ſo modeſt and humble, as to ſuppoſe that there may be ways of reconciling thoſe, which appear to them Contradictions, tho' they have not yet found them out; they muſt fall under the ſame condemnation with thoſe, who will deny the Being of God, if they cannot ſatisfie themſelves how he made and governs the World; or with thoſe that would believe none of our Saviour's Miracles, unleſs he would work them when, and where, and juſt in what manner they pleaſed. But the Wiſdom of God ſees that nothing would ſatisfie theſe Men, and that they only tempt God, and deſign no real ſatisfaction to themſelves: and therefore he cannot be obliged to new model the World, and alter the Scriptures for their ſakes, ſince there is enough in them for the ſatisfaction of all that are ſincere in their Enquiries after Truth.

II. The only way to judge rightly of the particular places of any Book, is to conſider firſt the whole

Deſign, and Contrivance, and Method, and Stile of it, not to criticize upon ſome difficult Parts of it, without any regard had to the reſt. This is the method uſed by all, who would criticize with judgment upon any Author. And ſome Paſſages of Scripture are explained to our hands, to be a Key, as it were, and a Direction to us in the Explication of others. Thus, whereas in one place it is ſaid, *that Jeſus baptized*, in another it is ſaid, *that he baptized not*, and the former place is explained to be meant not of Baptiſm performed by himſelf, but by his Diſciples, who baptized in his Name, *John* iii. 22. iv. 1, 2.

III. A negative Argument is no proof againſt the Authority of any Hiſtory; but if one Author omit what another relates, both may nevertheleſs write the truth. *Behold, I ſend the Promiſe of my Father upon you*, Luke xxiv. 49. This Promiſe is not mentioned in St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, nor in any other but St. *John*'s; which is a thing, ſays [b] St. *Auguſtine*, not ſlightly to be paſs'd over: But we ought from hence to take notice, how the Evangeliſts confirm each others Teſtimony in ſome things, which they do not relate themſelves, tho' they had knowledge of them. And that here St. *Luke* omits all that paſs'd from Chriſt's Reſurrection to his Aſcenſion, tho' he informs us in the Acts of the Apoſtles, that there was the ſpace of forty Days between.

When two Facts, related by ſeveral Authors, agree in all but ſome few circumſtances, they are often taken for the ſame Fact, and the Authors are ſuppoſed to write contrary the one to the other. Both St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* relate, that Chriſt fed about Five thouſand Men, beſide Women and Children, with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, twelve Baskets full of Fragments remaining after they had eaten, *Matth.* xiv. 17. *Mark* vi. 38. And that with ſeven Loaves and a few little Fiſhes, he fed four thouſand Men, be-

[b] Aug. de Conſenſ. Evang. l. 3. c. 25.

ſide Women and Children, and that ſeven Baskets full of Fragments were taken up, *Matth.* xv. 34. *Mark* viii. 5. But, as [c] St. *Auguſtine* obſerves, if one Evangeliſt had given an account only of the Miracle of the five Loaves, and the other had related only the Miracle of the ſeven Loaves, theſe two Miracles might have been taken for but one, and the Evangeliſts might have been thought to give a contrary account of the ſame Miracle: From whence he lays this down for a Rule, that if a like Fact be told by two Evangeliſts in a different manner, we ſhould rather conclude, that they ſpeak of two different Facts, than that they contradict each other, becauſe in this inſtance of the Loaves, if both Evangeliſts had not related both Miracles, they might have been taken for the ſame. But we may here alſo obſerve, that St. *Matthew* ſays, about five thouſand Men were fed by the firſt Miracle, beſides Women and Children; St. *Mark*, that they were about five thouſand Men; and the number fed by the ſecond Miracle, St. *Matthew* reckons four thouſand Men, beſide Women and Children; St. *Mark* ſays, about four thouſand. St. *Matthew* is more particular as to this circumſtance of the Fact, than St. *Mark*, who relates no more than was neceſſary to give an exact account of the reality of the Miracle; for the Miracle was unqueſtionably true, whether about five thouſand Men were fed, beſides Women and Children, or only about five thouſand Men; or whether they were four thouſand Men beſide Women and Children, or about four thouſand. What St. *Mark* relates, was ſufficient to prove the truth of each Miracle; and of the Perſons fed thereby, St. *Matthew* had given a full account, which was diſperſed into all hands.

IV. It is reaſonable to obſerve, whether the Objections be not ſuch as do ſuppoſe Miſtakes, which a Man, who could write ſuch a Diſcourſe, as they are

[c] Ib. l. 2. c. 49.

imagined to be found in, could not run into. For if they be of this Nature, this very Conſideration is enough to take off the force of the Objection againſt the Authority of any Book; and we muſt conclude, that the Objections are capable of being anſwered, and that the Miſtake lies not in the Book it ſelf, but in the Readers, who without ſufficient skill or attention, paſs a raſh judgment upon it. For by all the Rules of Reaſoning, an Objection may imply too much, as well as prove too little to be of any force: And the common Rules of Candor and Equity, would prevent many Objections which are wont to be made againſt the Scriptures. For if we will but ſuppoſe the writers of the Scriptures to have been Men of any tolerable Senſe, even without Inſpiration, they could never have committed ſuch miſtakes as ſome would faſten upon them. *Iſrael beheld Joſeph's Sons, and ſaid, Who are theſe?* Gen. xlviii. 8. and yet *the Eyes of Iſrael were dim for Age, ſo that he could not ſee*, ver. 10. *i.e.* he could not ſee plainly and diſtinctly the Objects before him. In like manner, we read, *Exod.* xxxiii. 11. *And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes, face to face, as a Man ſpeaketh unto his Friend:* yet, *ver.* 20. the Lord anſwers *Moſes*, who had beſought God to ſhew him his Glory. *Thou canſt not ſee my face: for there ſhall no Man ſee me, and live.* Would it not be impudent trifling to pretend any contradiction in theſe two Verſes, when they are eaſily underſtood in a conſiſtent ſenſe, and no Man of any judgment can be ſuppoſed to write Contradictions, and lay them ſo near together? God himſelf ſpake immediately to *Moſes*, not by the Meſſage of an Angel, *even apparently, and not in dark Speeches*, Num. xii. 8. When it is ſaid, *Acts* ix. 7. that the Men, who journeyed with St. *Paul*, *heard a Voice, but ſaw no Man:* and, *Acts* xxii. 9. that *they heard not the Voice of him that ſpake to St. Paul:* beſides the Explications which are known and obvious to reconcile theſe Texts, thoſe, who will not be at the pains

pains to conſult Expoſitors, or to conſider the importance of the Words, may be pleaſed to obſerve, that St. *Luke* was a Man bred to Learning; and this Hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, ſhews him to have been, at leaſt, a prudent and wiſe Man; and therefore he could never have written ſo palpable a Contradiction, as the Objection muſt ſuppoſe, in ſo ſmall a compaſs, concerning one of the moſt remarkable things in his whole Hiſtory, relating to a Perſon, with whom he conſtantly travelled and convers'd. I appeal to any Man, whether, if he had met with two ſuch Paſſages, which ſeem to contradict each other, in *Thucydides* or *Xenophon*, or, even in the very worſt Hiſtorian, he would not be enclined rather to ſeek out for ſome way of reconciling them, than to ſuſpect that he could ſo ſoon forget what he had written ſo little a while before, in an account of a thing of that nature. Of the ſame kind is that difference, which is between the Genealogy of Chriſt in St. *Matthew*, and that in St. *Luke*. For there is no doubt but the Genealogies of the *Jews* were then, and long after, extant in the Publick Regiſters,[d] they could repeat them by heart with as much readineſs as they could their own Names; and to inſert a wrong Genealogy, had been to give up all the Arguments that could be alledg'd for our Saviour's being the Chriſt: Nothing could be more deſtructive to their Cauſe, than for the Evangeliſts to produce a falſe Pedigree, when the true one might be ſo eaſily produced by any who had a mind to diſprove them. The Merits of their Cauſe wholly depended upon the Proof of Chriſt's Deſcent from *Abraham* and *David*; and therefore whatever difficulties there may now be thought to be in this two-fold Genealogy, it was certainly acknowledged

[d] Ab exordio Adam uſque ad extremum Zorobabel, omnium generationes ita memoriter velociterque percurrunt, ut eos ſuum putes referee nomen. Hieron. in Tit. iii. 9.

by thoſe of that Age, and beyond all Diſpute, or elſe it would never have been produced by the Evangeliſts, or had for ever ruin'd their Cauſe, if they had produced it.

Some Crimes are too great to charge upon Men of any Credit or Reputation; and ſome Errors are ſo notorious that no Man of common Prudence can be ſuppoſed to commit them: And therefore when we find an Author rational and conſiſtent in other parts of a Diſcourſe, the ordinary Ingenuity and Candour of Mankind will hinder us from ſuppoſing him to commit groſs and palpable Miſtakes; and it is great Diſingenuity and Folly to ſhew the leſs Reſpect to any Author, becauſe he is at leaſt believ'd to have written by Inſpiration, or to deny him the Reſpect due to a Man, becauſe God has enabled him to write infallible Truth.

V. If any Contradictions be framed or forced from the various Readings, the Difficulties in Chronology, or whatever elſe of this nature is to be found in the Diſputes of Criticks, they prove no more againſt the Authority of the Scriptures, than they do againſt the Authority of all other Books in the World; unleſs it could be ſhewn that theſe Difficulties could not happen in a Book written by Divine Inſpiration, but that it muſt be firſt written in ſuch a manner as to afford no occaſion for Diſputes, and that it muſt be ever after ſo preſerv'd by a conſtant Miracle, that it may be ſubject to none of the Accidents and Caſualties, to which all other Books are liable. On the contrary, it can never be proved, that God might not permit Books written by Inſpiration, to be obnoxious to any ſuch Caſualties as are not prejudicial to the End and Deſign of a Revelation. But if the *neceſſary* Points of *Doctrine* be preſerv'd entire, and the *Evidence* of *Matters of Fact* be ſufficient to prove the Truth of the *Miracles* and *Prophecies* in Confirmation of that Doctrine; all leſſer Matters may be

be left to the ſame Contingencies which befal all other Books in the World.

That the Evidence is very clear and full in Proof both of the *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, which demonſtrate to us the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, has been already ſhewn, and if no more could be produced than has by me been brought to prove their Authority; yet unleſs this can be proved to be inſufficient from ſome Miſtakes or Defects in it, no ſuch Objections can invalidate it. Becauſe no Man can prove that God might not ſuffer a Book written by his own Appointment and Authority, to be encumber'd through length of Time, and the Frailty and Negligence of Men, with inſuperable Difficulties, if it be ſuppoſed ſtill to retain the viſible Marks and Characters of a Divine Original in all the *Evidence* neceſſary to prove it from *Matter of Fact*, and in the *Doctrines* deliver'd by it. For as long as theſe two things are ſecured, all the reſt, though it be of never ſo great Uſe and Excellency, yet cannot be neceſſary in order to the ends of a Divine Revelation. And therefore a Book of Divine Revelation might be permitted by God for the Sins, and by the Fault and Ignorance of Men, to become perplex'd with abundance of divers Readings, and even with Contradictions in the Chronological and leſs material Points of it. For ſo long as it cannot be proved Defective as to the ends and purpoſes of a Divine Revelation, either for want of Evidence to make it appear to be ſuch, or thro' Defect of the Matter and Doctrine contain'd in it; all other Difficulties will never prove it not to be of Divine Authority, becauſe ſo long there is no Defect, but what might be in any Book, tho' we ſuppoſe it to be of Divine Authority.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Creation of the World, and the Preſervation of it.

BY *Creation* in the Book of *Geneſis*, is underſtood not only the Production of the World out of Nothing, but the Formation and Diſpoſal of the ſeveral Parts of the Univerſe. But there has an Opinion of late years prevail'd, very injurious to Religion, and repugnant to Reaſon and the Judgment of former Ages; That God only created Matter and gave it Motion, to be perform'd under certain Laws, by which all the *Phænomena* of Nature both in the Creation and Preſervation of Things are brought about, without any farther immediate Divine Power or Concourſe, than what is juſt neceſſary to continue this Matter and Motion in Being; that is, God created Matter, and put it into Motion, and then Matter and Motion do all the reſt in a ſettled Courſe, and by eſtabliſh'd Laws, without any need of the Divine Aid or Direction. This Notion indeed can never be reconcil'd to the Scriptures, but then it is as little befriended by Reaſon and Natural Religion. In proof of which, I ſhall conſider: I. The Creation of the World. II. The Preſervation of it; and ſhall ſhew, that neither of them could be perform'd in this way.

I. As to the Creation, we may conſider both the *Time* and the *Manner* of it. And by the Time of the Creation, we may underſtand either the Time, when the Creation of the World began, or the Time which was taken up in the Creation of it. But this latter Senſe will come under what is to be ſaid of the Manner of the Creation.

1. The Time of the Creation of the World, as that ſignifies the Beginning of Time, or of the World's Dura-

Duration, muſt be wholly Arbitrary, and abſolutely at God's Sovereign Pleaſure and Diſpoſal. For there could be nothing in eternal Duration to fix the Creation of the World more to one time than another, or to determine why it ſhould begin ſooner or later. And ſince it is impoſſible that the World ſhould be eternal, it is evident, that the Time of the Creation, whenever it was, can be no good Objection, becauſe, tho' the World had been created never ſo long before, there muſt neceſſarily have been as much a Pretence for ſuch an Objection. For there muſt have been ſome Period of Time, when the World had exiſted no longer than it has done now: and no beginning of the World can be ſuppoſed ſo long ago, but ſtill it might with the ſame Reaſon be ask'd, why it was not created ſooner?

2. In conſidering the *Manner* of the World's Creation, I ſhall prove, (1.) That there is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe the World to have been at the firſt made by Mechanical Laws, though it were preſerv'd according to ſuch Laws. (2.) That there are ſufficient Reaſons to be given for its Creation in that manner, which we find related in the Book of *Geneſis*.

(1.) There is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe the World to have been at firſt made by Mechanical Laws, though it were preſerved according to ſuch Laws, (whereas I ſhall afterwards prove, that it is not preſerv'd according to them.) There is no Reaſon that the World ſhould be firſt framed according to the Laws of Motion, which are eſtabliſh'd for its Preſervation and Government in its fix'd and ſettled State. The Origine of the Univerſe was by the immediate hand of God, before the Appointment of the ſeveral Laws which afterwards were to take place; and we may as well endeavour to reduce the working of Miracles to the ſtanding Laws of Nature as the Creation of the World. For certainly of all Miracles the Creation of the World muſt be the greateſt, not only as it ſignifies

ſies the Production of Matter and Motion out of Nothing, but as it was the putting things into ſuch Order, as to make them capable of the Laws of Motion ordain'd for them. It is not yet agreed, nor is it ever like to be, what theſe Laws of Motion are, which the Philoſophers ſo much talk of, and there being ſuch a mutual Connexion and Combination of Bodies, and ſuch a Dependence of every Body upon ſo many others in every Motion, it is impoſſible to know how any two Bodies would act upon each other, if they were ſeparate from all Bodies beſides, or were out of that State which they now are in. It is reaſonable therefore to imagine, that the ſeveral Parts of the World muſt be ranged and ſettled before theſe Laws could take place; and to reduce the Creation of the World to the Laws of Motion which now prevail in it, is to ſuppoſe a Creation antecedent to that by which the World was made. This is as if an *Indian* ſhould attempt to give an Account of the making of a Watch by the ſeveral Motions, which he ſees perform'd in it after it is made, and ſhould imagine that the Materials moving in ſuch a manner, at laſt arriv'd to the exact frame of a Watch. It is confeſs'd, that the firſt Animals could be produced by no Laws of Motion, or Powers of Nature: and is it not as reaſonable to believe, that the reſt of the Creation was effected by the ſame miraculous Operation, and (according to the Style of *Moſes*) by ſuch a Divine Command, as had its immediate Effect, without any Intervention of Second Cauſes?

(2.) There are ſufficient Reaſons to be given for the Creation of the World in that manner, which we find related in the Book of *Geneſis*. It is great Preſumption in Men to be too curious and inquiſitive about the Reaſons of God's Actions: for whatever he delivers of himſelf, we ought entirely to believe both the Thing it ſelf, and the Manner and Circumſtances of it. *Where waſt thou, when I laid the foundations of*

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the earth? declare, if thou haſt underſtanding, Job xxxviii. 4. But this muſt be ſaid to the Glory of God, and to the Shame of all ſuch as cenſure and cavil at his Word, that even by Men ſuch Reaſons may be given of his Actions, as all his Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay.

God hath *ordered all things in meaſure, and number, and weight*, Wiſd. xi. 20. And as to thoſe who enquire, why the World was created in ſix days rather than in one day, or in an inſtant, or in a long Compaſs of Years, as the Laws of Matter and Motion, they ſay, require: It might be ſufficient to ask, why, if it was God's Will, the World might not be created in ſix Days, as well as in any other number of Days, or ſpace of Time? If the Creation had been in an inſtant, or in a longer or ſhorter ſpace of Time, the Queſtion might with as much Reaſon have been put, why it was not created in ſix Days? Shall Men preſume to preſcribe to God the Time and Manner of his Actions? Is not his own Pleaſure a ſufficient Reaſon of them? The Manner of the Creation and of the Flood, which have of late been the Subject of ſo many Diſputes, depends ſolely upon the Will and Pleaſure of God, and therefore we can know only by Revelation, how they were effected, and it is in vain to pretend that they muſt have come to paſs in this or that manner, unleſs it could be prov'd, that God could not bring them to paſs any other way than that, which the Inventor of ſome *Hypotheſis* thinks fit to propoſe. Moſt Actions may be perform'd very different ways; and if, for inſtance, we had only a general account of the Paſſage of the *Iſraelites* out of *Ægypt* into the Land of *Canaan*; that *Pharaoh* purſuing them, was drown'd with his whole Army, that they travell'd in the Wilderneſs forty Years, and had a ſufficient Proviſion of Food, and Cloathing, and Water for ſo great a Multitude, in ſo barren a place, and for ſo long a time: tho' never ſo many Conjectures

ſhould

ſhould be made, how all this might be, and never ſo many Schemes were drawn of their Journeyings and Encampments; if it could be ſuppoſed poſſible, that one of all theſe might prove true, yet it would be utterly impoſſible to know which were it. But when we are only told, that God created the World in ſix Days, and that ſuch and ſuch things were created on each of theſe Days, that he brought a Deluge of Waters upon the whole Earth, for the Sins of Mankind; which continued for ſuch a time upon the face of the Earth; ſome Men will needs aſſign the particular Means and Manner, by which both the Creation and the Flood muſt neceſſarily have been brought to paſs, as if the Wiſdom and Power of God, and the Nature of things could admit of no other way, but what they can explain. We may eſteem the Learning, and admire the Sagacity, and allow the good Intentions of theſe Authors; but when any one advanceth an *Hypotheſis* in contradiction to all others, and propoſes it, not as probable, but as the only true Explication of Scripture, and poſitively maintains, not only that things might be ſo, if God pleas'd, but that they were ſo, and could not be otherwiſe; this to me ſeems more unaccountable, than any thing I ever met with beſides, in the very worſt *Hypotheſis*. We can know nothing of the way and manner how God has been pleas'd to do any thing but by his own Revelation. If each *Hypotheſis* were poſſible, yet no Man could be certain which were the right, or that any of them were ſo; becauſe God might make uſe of ſome other Means than what Men can imagine. But when the ſeveral *Hypotheſes* deſtroy one another, and every one pretends to ſet up his own in contradiction to all the reſt, and none can maintain its Ground any longer than till another has been brought to confute it, it were ſtrange, if Men ſhould ſatisfy themſelves with ſuch Uncertainties, rather than with the plain Word of God.

Accor-

According to any Mechanical *Hypotheſis*, (tho' there were no *Vacuum*) ſo many Accidents muſt continually intervene in a Chaos of Matter confuſedly rolling and knocking one part of it againſt another, that it ſeems next to an impoſſibility, that it ſhould ever ſettle into any Order: at leaſt, if Matter had been left to its own workings and jumblings according to any Mechanical Laws of Motion, the World, for ought any Man can prove, might not have been made to this moment. So far is it from being poſſible to underſtand, how, upon Mechanical Principles, the World ſhould have been made in ſix Years, rather than in ſix Days, conſiſting of four and twenty Hours. It is therefore the boldeſt Attempt that can be conceived, for Men to pretend to aſſign the ſeveral ſteps and degrees in the proceſs of this wonderful Operation, with as much eaſe and certainty, as if they had all the Materials by them in their Laboratory, and could perform it as readily as an ordinary courſe of Chymiſtry. Next to attempt the making of a World, what Undertaking can be more daring than to pretend to diſcover how it was made? To make a World muſt undoubtedly be the Work of God, and he alone can declare how he made it. But Reaſons may be given for the Creation of the World in ſix Days; 1. With reſpect to Angels; 2. With reſpect to Men.

1. With reſpect to the Angels. It is [a] St. *Auſtin*'s Opinion, that the ſix Days of the Creation of the World in the Book of *Geneſis*, are diſtinguiſhed according to the Perception which the Angels had of the Creation; from whence was framed that diſtinction of the [b] Schoolmen, between *Cognitio Matutina* and *Cognitio Veſpertina*. And tho' what I am about to ſay, is not exactly agreeable to St. *Auſtin*'s Notion,

[a] Aug. ſuper. Gen. ad Literam. lib. iv. c. 22, &c. De Civit. Dei, lib. xi. c. 7.

[b] Tho. Aquin. Sum. Part 1. Qu. 58. Art. 6.

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yet I hope his Authority will warrant my arguing from this Topick, to ſuch as may think it new and ſingular.

The Angels were the beginning of the Creation, and were created probably in the Morning of the firſt Day. For in the Book of *Job*, God ſays, that when the Foundations of the Earth were laid, *the Morning Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God ſhouted for joy*, Job xxxviii. 7. from whence we learn, that the Angels were created before this viſible World, and glorified God for his creating it. Now the Angels, tho' bleſſed and glorious Spirits, yet are finite, and are unable to comprehend and fathom the wonderful Works of God; there are things which *the Angels deſire to look into*, 1 Pet. i. 12. and the more they know of God and his Works, the more they adore and praiſe him. The whole Scene of the Creation ſeems to have been laid open in order before them, according to the ſeveral degrees and the various natures of things, whereby they muſt have had a fuller view and a clearer underſtanding of the Divine Power and Wiſdom, than they could have had, if the World had ſtarted forth in an inſtant, and jump'd, as it were, into this beautiful Frame and Order. As he who ſees the whole method and contrivance of any curious Piece of Art, values and admires the Artiſt more than one does that beholds it in Groſs. God was pleaſed therefore to diſplay his Glory before the Angels, and by ſeveral ſteps and degrees, to excite their Praiſe, and Love, and Adoration, which moved them to *Songs* and *Shouts of Joy*, and by this means his Glory and their own Happineſs was advanced, much beyond what it would have been, if all things had been created and diſpoſed into their Rank and Order at one moment. They look'd into the firſt Principles and Seeds of Things, and every day preſented them with a glorious ſpectacle of new Wonders; the firſt ſeven Days of the World, they kept a continual Triumph

or

or Jubilee; and thus their Voices were tun'd and rais'd, as I may ſay, to thoſe Praiſes, which were to be their Employment and their Happineſs to all Eternity; the more they ſaw, the more they knew, and the more they knew of the Works of God, the more they for ever love and adore him.

This affords us a Reaſon, why ſo much more time was ſpent in the forming of the Earth, and the Creatures belonging to it, than in the formation of the heavenly Bodies. Becauſe the Heavens are of an uniform and ſimilar Nature, and a vaſt *Vacuum* is now ſuppoſed to be in them, and therefore the Nature of them might, without any ſucceſſive Production, be diſplayed at once to the Angels; but the Earth being of a compound Nature, and containing Creatures of very different kinds, it required more time to give a diſtinct Perception of the ſeveral Parts and Species of it. And the Planets being of the like nature with the Earth, ſince the Earth, the Seat of Man's Habitation was framed by ſuch leiſurely degrees, as might give a ſuitable Idea of it; the other Planets might be framed at once, there being nothing more in them than what was obſervable in the formation of the Earth, or they might be framed together with the Earth by the ſame Meaſures and Degrees.

But according to the mechanical way, the Angels would have only the proſpect of a vaſt Chaos, rolling and working for many thouſands of Years, perhaps before any thing conſiderable could have been framed out of it: And thoſe tedious Delays muſt yet, according to this Notion, have been carried on by ſuch certain Methods, that there could have been little wonderful in it to an Angel, when the mechanical Philoſophers themſelves think they can point out the ſeveral Steps and Motions by which all was done.

The making of Man was the laſt and finiſhing Work of the Creation, when the World was prepared for the reception of him, and he was made with much Solemnity.

lemnity. *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeneſs*, Gen. i. 26. and the Man and the Woman were made apart. For *Adam* was created with all the Perfections ſuitable for him, both as *a Man*, and as the *firſt Man*, out of whom *Eve* was to be formed: As Man he was to have all the Parts and Faculties which Men have now, but in greater perfection; as the firſt Man, he was beſides to have a *Rib*, or [c] *Part*, out of which the Woman was to be made. Which being the principal, and, as it were, the ſeminal Matter, no mention is made of any other; but as Animals and Plants are properly ſaid to come from the Seed, tho' they are not made of that only; ſo *Eve* was properly made of *Adam*'s Rib, tho' other Matter beſides might go to her Compoſition. This way of Formation was to betoken that Love and Duty which ought to be between Husband and Wife. And as the Creation and Happineſs of Man provoked the Envy of Evil Angels, ſo no doubt it occaſioned the Joy and Praiſe of the Good ones.

2. By this ſucceſſive and gradual production and diſpoſition of things in ſix days at the Creation, the Glory of God is likewiſe more manifeſted to Men than it would have been, if all had been done at once, or by ſlow and tedious Methods. This gives us a more clear and diſtinct comprehenſive Notion of the Works of God than we could otherwiſe have had. It is acknowledged, that *Moſes* has given ſuch an Account of the Creation, as is more intelligible and better adapted to the Capacities of the generality of Men, than that which any one would now obtrude upon us as a true Account of it: But whatever Reaſons can be

[c] Dicunt etiam *Unam ex coſtis ejus* idem eſſe quod unam ex partibus ejus, vel unam partem ejus quam explicationem confirmant ex eo quod in Targum vocabulum *Tzelah* coſta redditur per *Setar* ut *Tzelah* coſta Tabernaculi redditur in Targum per *Setar* latus Tabernaculi, ita hic dicunt *Mitzalotar* idem eſſe quod *Miſſitrohi*. Maimon. More Nevoch. Part 2. c. 30.

aſſigned why the Creation ſhould be deſcribed as it is in the Book of *Geneſis*; the ſame Reaſons will prove, that it was fitting it ſhould be ſo performed: If it be more ſuitable to the Capacities and Apprehenſions of Men, that the Creation of the World ſhould be delivered to us as finiſhed in ſix days, rather than in a leſs or a longer time; it was fit that it ſhould have been really finiſhed in this ſpace of time, and ſhould be indeed ſo performed as might make the Hiſtory the more uſeful to us. For, in reſpect of God, it was alike to create all things in an inſtant, or to do it ſucceſſively in a ſhorter or a longer time; and in reſpect of Mankind, no Reaſon can be aſſigned why the Hiſtory of the Creation ſhould be delivered ſo as to repreſent it to Men as performed in this manner; but the ſame Reaſon will hold, why it ſhould have been in the ſame manner performed.

God bleſſed the ſeventh Day, and ſanctified it, becauſe that in it he had reſted from all his Work which God created and made, Gen. ii. 3. and ſo, *Exod.* xx. 10, 11. the Obſervation of the Sabbath, or of one Day in ſeven to the Honour of God, is eſtabliſhed upon the World's being created in ſix Days; and therefore, if it be reaſonable to keep one Day in ſeven holy, in remembrance of the Creation, it muſt be reaſonable that the Creation of the World ſhould have been performed in ſix Days, ſince the obligation to obſerve a ſeventh Day in remembrance of the Creation, implies that God reſted on the ſeventh Day after he had created the World in ſix, or in the ſame ſpace of time, which is contained in ſix Days. God ſaw it fitting that a Day ſhould be ſet apart to commemorate the Creation, and to praiſe him for all his wonderful Works, and that this Day ſhould return at ſuch a diſtance of time; and he obſerved ſuch Order in the Creation, that every Day between theſe Periods of Time, might bring ſome particular Work of it to

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remembrance, and every ſeventh Day might conclude in the Commemoration of the whole Creation.

Our Saviour anſwers the Phariſees, when they propoſed the Queſtion to him about Divorces, by putting them in mind of the Order which God uſed in the Creation, *Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them Male and Female? and ſaid, for this cauſe ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and ſhall cleave to his Wife: and they twain ſhall be one Fleſh?* Matth. xix. 4, 5. And St. *Paul* in like manner, to ſhew that the Woman ought not to uſurp Authority over the Man, proves it by this Argument: *For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve,* 1 Tim. ii. 13. and in another place, and upon another occaſion, he obſerves, that *the Man is not of the Woman, but the Woman of the Man,* 1 Cor. xi. 8. And long before the Prophet *Malachi* had argued from the ſame Topick, *Malach.* ii. 15. And *Heb.* iv. 4. it is noted, that *God did reſt the ſeventh Day from all his Works,* from whence the Apoſtle concludes, that *he that is entred into his reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own Works, as God did from his,* ver. 10. Now as theſe, and whatever other Arguments are to be found in the Scriptures of the like nature, do evidently ſuppoſe the Creation of the World in the ſame manner, as it is related in the Book of *Geneſis*; ſo they explain to us the Reaſons why it was thus created. For all theſe Arguments had been loſt, and there could have been no ground for them, if the World had been otherwiſe created. As certainly therefore as this Arguing from the manner of the Creation is good; ſo certain it is, both that the World was ſo created, and that there was great reaſon for it.

But whatever ſome Philoſophers may think now, there is nothing which would have been more diſagreeable to the Notions of the generality of the wiſeſt Men in all Ages, than that the World ſhould be made upon mechanical Principles. *He ſpake, and it was done,*

done, he commanded, and it ſtood faſt, Pſal. xxxiii. 9. *He commanded, and they were created*, Pſal. cxlviii. 5. This expreſſes not only the truth of the Hiſtory, but the general ſenſe of Mankind, who have ever had this Notion of God, that to command and to do is the ſame thing with him. And therefore the Objection, till of late, has run the other way, that God did rather create the World in an inſtant than in ſix Days. It was little ſuſpected formerly, that divers Years or many Ages were ſpent in the Creation. It was in the Deſcription of the Creation of the World, that *Longinus* obſerved the ſublime Style of *Moſes*, and if the Relation of it be admirable, the Creation it ſelf, in ſuch a manner as is there related, muſt be much more admirable. For it is proper for it to be thus deſcribed, for no other reaſon, but becauſe it was proper for it in this manner to be done. But what would *Longinus* have ſaid, if the Creation had been related to have been performed, not by any command which had its immediate effect, but by the tedious proceſs of mechanical Cauſes? What Grandeur, what Evidence of the Divine Power and Majeſty is there in this more than in any Chimical Operation, if the mechanical *Hypotheſis* were true?

It were ſtrange Preſumption to demand of Almighty God a Reaſon of all his Actions, and not to believe him upon his Word, that he has done any thing, but when and how ſome Men conceit it ought to have been done. But what I have now ſaid, may at leaſt ſerve to ſilence the Cavils of ſuch Men.

II. The Preſervation of the World is not performed according to mechanical Laws or Principles. The mechanical *Hypotheſis* ſuppoſes that Bodies act upon Bodies, or Actives upon Paſſives, in a certain courſe, and according to ſuch Laws, as that being left to themſelves, they neceſſarily produce their Effects without any immediate interpoſition of a Divine

Power. But this Notion is grounded wholly upon Miſtakes.

1. It ſuppoſes that there was at firſt a certain quantity of Motion infuſed or impreſſed upon Matter, which ſtill continues paſſing from one Body to another, according to certain Methods or Rules preſcribed. But this Suppoſition that there is always the ſame Quantity of Motion in the World, is wholly precarious, or rather notoriouſly falſe: For upon the encreaſe of Mankind, and of all other Animals, muſt not Motion, in which all Animal Life conſiſts, neceſſarily encreaſe in the ſame Proportion? Or, is there the ſame Motion in the Food we eat, that there is in the Blood and Animal Spirits? And the beſt Philoſophers have been able to give no account how Motion can be communicated without an immediate impulſe or concourſe of the Divine Power.

2. By the mechanical *Hypotheſis*, it is ſuppoſed as a thing certain, that there is a *Plenum*, which at leaſt is very uncertain, or rather it has been demonſtrated by Sir *Iſaac Newton*, that there is a *Vacuum* not only interſperſed, but of a prodigious, and almoſt incredible extent, at the diſtance of the Earth's Semidiameter from us. And by his Principles, Gravitation muſt proceed from an immediate and conſtant impreſſion or impulſe of God. For it proceeds from no Action of one Body upon another, but is a Quality belonging to all Matter alike, and to every Particle of Matter, however ſeparate and diſtant from all others. The *Projectile* Motion, and that *Attractive* Force, by which the Planets are carried in their Orbits, cannot be communicated or performed according to any mechanical Laws, whereby they are determined from a *Rectilinear* to an *Orbicular* Motion. For Bodies can act upon Bodies only by contact, and therefore cannot communicate their Motion, or any way determine, or affect the Motion of each other in a *Vacuum*, ſo vaſt as it muſt be near the circumference of the

the ſeveral Orbits, ſo that the old *Occult Qualities* and *Subſtantial Forms* were not more repugnant to the Mechanical *Hypotheſis* than theſe Principles are. The Being of a *Vacuum* muſt ſuppoſe an immediate Divine Power neceſſary to keep the Syſtem of the World in that Order in which we ſee it continue. For otherwiſe by this Principle of Gravitation's being inherent in every part of Matter, all Bodies would preſs towards the Center, and in a *Vacuum* there can be nothing to hinder their Tendency towards it, till they come crowding one upon another; ſo that all the Order of things would ſoon be reduced to one confuſed Heap or Maſs, unleſs ſome immaterial Power interpoſed to hinder it.

It is evident then, that the Mechanical *Hypotheſis* is quite deſtroy'd by theſe Principles. For by theſe here is no Connexion of Cauſes and Effects according to any Laws of mere Matter and Motion; but all muſt be done by the immediate Power of God, Gravitation and the Projectile Motion muſt be impreſs'd and ſuſpended without any Dependence upon ſurrounding Bodies; they muſt produce their Effects through prodigious void Spaces, where Bodies have no Communication of Motion from one to another. And all being perform'd by the immediate directing and aſſiſting hand of God, a Man may as well pretend to ſolve a Miracle mechanically, as to give any Account of the *Phænomena* of Nature by Mechanical Laws according to theſe Principles. Through an immenſe void ſpace, the Sun's Rays find their regular and conſtant way, and in a few minutes paſs from the Sun to the Earth: for which there is no Cauſe aſſignable from the Attractive Power; which ſhould rather detain the Rays of Light in a perpetual Circulation about the Sun's Center, than dart them forth, by ſo violent a Motion, to the remoteſt Diſtances. But *God ſaid, let there be light, and there was light*, Gen. i. 14. *He has prepar'd the light and the ſun*, Pſal. lxxiv. 16. This is the beſt

and moſt philoſophical account, that has ever been given of the Production of Light. For by a late Diſcourſe of the ſame [d] excellent Author laſt mention'd, it is evident, that all the *Phænomena* of Light depend upon no Mechanical Laws, but are directly contrary to them. He ſhews, "That all homogeneal Light has "its proper Colour, anſwering to its Degree of Re- "frangibility, or to ſpeak properly, it has a certain "Power and Diſpoſition to excite this or that Co- "lour; and that Colour cannot be changed by Re- "flexions or Refractions: That the Whiteneſs of the "Sun's Light is compounded of all the Primary Co- "lours mix'd in a due Proportion. That every Ray "of Light, in its Paſſage through any refracting Sur- "face, is put into a certain tranſient Conſtitution or "State, which in the Progreſs of the Ray returns at "certain Intervals, and diſpoſes the Ray at every Re- "turn to be eaſily tranſmitted through the next re- "fracting Surface, and between the Returns to be ea- "ſily refracted by it. Theſe Returns he terms, its "*Fits of eaſy Refraction*, and its *Fits of eaſy Tranſmiſſi- "on*, and the Space between the Returns, the *Inter- "vals of its Fits*; and the Intervals of theſe *Fits* have "Analogy to the Notes in Muſick. Laſtly, that the "Cauſe of Reflexion is not the impinging of Light "in the ſolid or impervious parts of Bodies, as is "commonly believ'd. From all which we may con- clude, that Natural Philoſophy muſt now be no lon- ger look'd upon as a Science, but a Hiſtory; and he is to be eſteem'd the beſt Philoſopher, who can beſt diſcover the Operations of Nature, and leaſt pretends to Mechanical Explications of them.

3. The Abettors of the Mechanical *Hypotheſis* argue, that God acts in the moſt general and uniform ways; that it is more becoming his Wiſdom to let Nature

[d] *Sir* Is. Newton's *Opticks*, l. i. p. 87, 90, 98. l. ii. p. 65, 77, 78, 81, 83.

have

have its Courſe; and that conſtantly to interpoſe, would be a Diſparagement to the Order and Contrivance in his Eſtabliſhment of the Laws of Motion; that Matter and Motion are with that Wiſdom ſet to work, that they can perform all without any more than preſerving and ſuſtaining them in their Being and Operations; and that he is the beſt Artiſt, who can contrive an Engine that ſhall need the leaſt meddling with, after it is made. But it ought to be conſider'd, what the Nature of the Engine is, and what the ends and uſes of it are, and if the Nature of it be ſuch, that it cannot anſwer the ends for which it was framed without ſometimes an aſſiſting hand, it would be no point of Wiſdom in the Artificer, for the Credit of his Contrivance, to loſe the moſt uſeful Ends deſign'd by it. As if among other uſes this curious Engine were deſign'd to reward the good, and puniſh bad Men; to remove the Puniſhment upon Amendment, and to renew it upon a Relapſe: Since Brute Matter is uncapable of varying its Motion, and ſuiting it ſelf to the ſeveral States and Changes of Free Agents; he muſt aſſiſt it unleſs he will loſe the Chief end for which it is to ſerve. It is no defect in the Skill and Wiſdom of the Almighty, that Matter and Motion have not Free Will as Men have: But it would be a great defect in his Wiſdom, not to make them the Inſtruments of Rewards and Puniſhments, becauſe it is impoſſible for them of themſelves to apply and ſuit themſelves to the ſeveral States and Conditions of Free Agents.

The Nature of Matter and Motion is ſuch, that they cannot ſerve all the deſigns of their Creator without his Interpoſition, and therefore he conſtantly doth interpoſe according to a certain Tenour which he has preſcribed to himſelf; but this Tenour and Courſe is alter'd upon ſome important Occaſions. In a natural and ordinary way he cures Diſeaſes, ſends Rain or dry Weather, or elſe our Prayers to him would be in-

ſignificant upon ſuch Occaſions, and there would be no room left for his inflicting theſe Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments. He feeds the Hungry that cry to him, and he puniſhes the Wicked when he ſees it fitting, by Famine, or Drought, or Peſtilence, in the ordinary methods of his Providence. But ſometimes he alters theſe ordinary methods, and acts above them or contrary to them, to ſignalize his Mercy or his Judgments: And thus Chriſt fed ſo many thouſands in the Wilderneſs, and God rain'd down Fire from Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* by a particular and miraculous Diſpenſation. Miracles are the particular Appointment of God in peculiar Caſes and Occaſions, and the Courſe of Nature is his general and perpetual Appointment at all other times. God at no time leaves Nature to it ſelf, but ever concurs with it, by aſſiſting its power and directing its courſe; he ordinarily interpoſes in the conſtant courſe of Things, according to eſtabliſh'd Laws: But Miracles are his wonderful Work, when he interpoſes in an extraordinary manner, and alters that method which he has preſcribed to himſelf to obſerve in the common courſe of Nature. God doth not in an extraordinary manner interpoſe to prevent the irregular or unuſual Productions of Nature, as in monſtrous Births, *&c.* For how irregular ſoever theſe may ſeem, yet they are according to this ſtanding Rule, that they ſhall be ſuffer'd to happen in certain Caſes; and they rarely happening, ſerve to illuſtrate the Divine Wiſdom in contriving Nature, ſo that in its general courſe all its Operations ſhould be regular and uniform; and from hence it appears that God doth not extraordinarily interpoſe to alter the courſe of Nature; but for great Ends, ſuperior to thoſe which concern only the material World.

We may well ſuppoſe that God has as much Regard to his Wiſdom in his Government of the Moral, as of the Material Part of the Creation; and yet he has

has added ſupplemental Laws to enforce the Moral Laws, and theſe additional Laws have been changed, as the Circumſtances and Condition of Men required. Why then ſhould the Laws of the Material World be ſo much more ſacred, as that he ſhould never intermeddle with them? He aſſiſts Moral Agents with the continual Supplies of his Grace, and Natural Agents with that Help which is needful for them to perform his Will. God may haſten and aſſiſt Natural Cauſes upon our Prayers, he may quicken the Motions and enforce the Powers of Nature, and remove ſecret Impediments, to help and make way for Natural Operations, or he may ſuſpend or retard Natural Cauſes.

To ſay that God has ſo order'd the courſe of Nature, as upon the Foreſight of Mens Prayers to him, to grant them what they pray for, and upon the Foreſight that they will not pray, to withhold from them what they want by Mechanical Laws, is by no means ſatisfactory. For there is neither Proof nor poſſibility of Proof of it; it is merely a Suppoſition without any ground of Reaſon, but only this, that the Mechanical Notion cannot otherwiſe be maintain'd. But I will ſuppoſe with much more Reaſon, that two Men are ſick of the ſame Diſeaſe, that the Circumſtances of the Diſeaſe are all the ſame, and all outward Accidents likewiſe the ſame, till the Prayers of one of them make a Difference. For one of theſe Men upon his Prayers recovers, the other neglecting to pray, dies. The Natural Cauſes are ſuppoſed to be the ſame, excepting only ſo far as Prayer moves God in his Mercy to make a Difference in their Caſe. To ſay that this never happen'd, is wholly precarious, and hard to believe; ſince it probably may often happen in Epidemical Diſtempers; but it is much harder to believe that it can never happen; and if this either have or can happen, it is not upon Foreſight of their Prayers, by the Contrivance of Mechanical Laws in their firſt Eſtabliſhment, but by an immediate Act,

that

that God aſſiſts Men upon their Prayers to him. The ſtrange Providential Deliverances of ſome certain Perſons are obſervable in every Age, and all Hiſtories mention them. But how ſhall particular Men, amidſt the greateſt Dangers, be preſerv'd in the common Calamities of the Sword, and Famine, and Peſtilence, but by a particular interpoſing Providence? Were theſe Men, who have been ſo remarkably preſerv'd all of one Conſtitution? Or do Soldiers ſlay mechanically, tho' the Plague and Famine ſhould be ſuppoſed to do ſo? I wonder it ſhould be thought leſs agreeable to Philoſophy, for God to interpoſe in directing Natural Cauſes than in over-ruling Moral Agents, where the Deſigns of Divine Providence equally require it. The ſame Providence delivers both *from the ſnare of the hunter, and from the noiſom peſtilence. A thouſand ſhall fall beſides thee, and ten thouſand at thy right hand, but it ſhall not come nigh thee*, Pſal. xci. 3, 7.

4. The Mechanical Philoſophy proceeds upon a wrong Notion of God, ſuppoſing it unworthy of him to be concern'd immediately in every thing which is done. We may as well imagine it below him to know every thing, as ſuppoſe it unworthy of him to concern himſelf in it: And yet he cannot but know every thing, being Omniſcient; and he cannot but concur in every Operation of Natural Cauſes, being Omnipreſent, and wherever he is, he acts. It is the Perfection of the Eye to ſee all that is within View, how ſmall and inconſiderable ſoever it be; nay, the ſmaller the Object diſcern'd is, the more perfect it proves the Sight to be: And if a Man could do every little thing at the ſame time that he does things of Importance, and with no Trouble to himſelf, it would be ſurely more Perfection in him than to do theſe only. But a Variety of Buſineſs is troubleſome to Men, and ſmall Affairs hinder and call them off from thoſe of moment. Tho' with God it is quite otherwiſe; he acts with the ſame Eaſe wherewith he ſees or knows or exiſts;

exiſts; he knows all things with one Omniſcient Thought, and he does all things by one omnipotent Act, nothing can be in the leaſt difficult to him, and nothing can be done without him, *in Him we live and move and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. And what the Scripture delivers relating to the Creation and Preſervation of the World, may, in ſtrictneſs of Philoſophy, be taken in a proper and literal Senſe. But do Men indeed conſider what it is to make and preſerve a World, when they pretend to ſhew by what ſteps God proceeds in it, and to explain the whole Proceſs, as it were, of the Operation? Is there not infinite Wiſdom required to know what infinite Power only can effect?

And after all, it is very probable both from Scripture and from Reaſon, that the inviſible and immaterial part of the Creation has a greater Share in the Guidance and Conduct of the viſible and material part of it, than is commonly ſuppoſed. For ſince the wonderful Improvement of experimental Philoſophy, and the various *Hypotheſes* which have been rais'd upon it; Men have been apt to look upon natural Philoſophy not only as a diſtinct Science, but as wholly ſeparate from the reſt, as if there were no Subordination and Dependence between the viſible and inviſible World; whereas it is reaſonable to believe, that there is a continued Connexion and Chain of Cauſes in the Operations and Productions of things, and a conſtant Influence and Intercourſe between the ſuperior and inferior created Beings. It is certain that God uſeth the Miniſtry of Angels in the Government of the World, but how far, and to what particular purpoſes, and upon what occaſions, no Man is able to determine: However, thoſe who have been the moſt curious Enquirers into Nature, daily meet with ſo many new and ſtrange Diſcoveries, that they have been forc'd to complain, that the Contrivers of *Hypotheſes* have been too haſty in framing them without a ſufficient number

of

of Experiments; from whence we may conclude, that if Men will firſt content themſelves to make Experiments in order to give a true Hiſtory of the *Phænomena* of Nature before they attempt to ſolve them upon their own Principles, the World will have an end before any complete Syſtem can be contrived to give any tolerable Account of them.

I will conclude this Chapter in the Words, with which Mr. *Huygens* concludes his Conjectures concerning the Planetary Worlds. *For my part*, ſays he, *I ſhall be very well contented, and ſhall count I have done a great matter, if I can but come to any knowledge of the Nature of things as they now are, never troubling my head about their Beginning, or how they were made, knowing That to be out of the Reach of Humane Knowledge, or even Conjecture.*

CHAP. X.

Of other Habitable Worlds beſides this Earth.

THoſe who think that there muſt be other Worlds inhabited beſides this Earth, where we dwell, or that elſe the Planets would be uſeleſs, and the Stars, which are like ſo many Suns, would ſhine to little purpoſe, do not conſider, that

I. It is as eaſy for Omnipotence to make a Planet or Star, as it is to make the leaſt thing in Nature.

II. The Glory of God Almighty in manifeſting his Power and Wiſdom, by making and preſerving ſuch vaſt Bodies in their ſeveral Orbs and Motions may be a ſufficient Reaſon for their Creation, tho' his Wiſdom ſhould ſee it fit not to have them inhabited. For tho' every thing be equally eaſy for God to perform, yet Men are apt to admire the Works of this kind moſt. They employ the Wits of many Men in all Ages to conſider their End and Nature, and to calculate their

their Diſtances and Motions, whoſe Curioſity might otherwiſe be very ill employed: there are ſome Genius's deſign'd, as it were, for theſe Studies, and they would want Matter to work upon without ſuch Objects. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work*, Pſal. xix. 1. This expreſſes the general ſenſe of Mankind, and is the Voice, as it were, of Nature it ſelf, as well as the Word of God. [a] *Anaxagoras* ſaid, he was ſent into the World to contemplate the heavenly Bodies: And the contemplation of them has contributed more than any one thing in Nature beſides, to preſerve a ſenſe of Religion among Heathens. And the [b] beſt and wiſeſt of them thought, that they could never enough extol the Beauty, and Uſefulneſs, and wondrous Excellency of theſe Bodies. And theſe Parts of Nature which are ſo beneficial, and afford ſuch ſatisfaction to Mankind in general, may fully anſwer all the Ends needful in their Creation, tho' they ſhould not be deſigned for ſuch farther Uſes, as ſome modern Philoſophers have contrived for them.

III. As the Satellites of *Jupiter* and *Saturn*, and many of the fix'd Stars were not diſcovered, till the Invention of Teleſcopes; ſo there are admirable Marks of Wiſdom in many other Parts of Nature, which were never known till of late, and never could have been diſcovered, but by the help of Microſcopes. But

[a] Diog. Laert.

[b] Celſos & erectos conſtituit (homines Deus) ut Deorum cognitionem, cœlum intuentes, capere poſſent. Sunt enim e terrâ homines, non ut incolæ atque habitatores, ſed quaſi ſpectatores ſuperarum rerum atque cœleſtium, quarum ſpectaculum ad nullum aliud genus Animantium pertinet. Cic. De Nat. Deor. l. 2. §. 140. Jam verò circuitus Solis & Lunæ, reliquorúmque ſiderum, quanquam etiam ad Mundi cohærentiam pertinent, tamen & ſpectaculum hominibus præbent. Nulla eſt enim inſatiabilior ſpecies nulla pulchrior, & ad rationem ſolertiámque præſtantior: eorum enim curſus demetiti maturitates Temporum, & varietates, mutationéſque cognovimus. Ib. §. 155.

Men are not the only Creatures, which are capable of praiſing and magnifying God for his wonderful Works: Angels, who know them more perfectly, do it much more; and they have need of no artificial Inſtruments to make Diſcoveries of the Divine Wiſdom and Power.

IV. The Stars may be of great benefit and uſefulneſs in the World, tho' they neither have that Influence which Aſtrologers vainly ſuppoſe, nor are as Suns to other Earths: For they ſerve to keep the circumjacent Air or Æther in Motion, which otherwiſe would congeal or ſtagnate; and to maintain that perpetual Circulation of Fluid Matter, which paſſes from Orb to Orb, through the Univerſe, and gives Life to all Things. It is now held, that the Rays of Light never returning to their Fountain, the Heat, and Light, and Bulk of the Sun, and Fix'd Stars, conſtantly decreaſe; tho' the Decreaſe is ſo very inconſiderable, that it is believed to be demonſtrable, *that if all the Fluid, which the Sun loſes in a Year, were brought into a ſolid Form, it would not equal a grain of Sand.* This muſt needs appear incredible to any one, who conſiders the prodigious efflux of Light from the Sun continually, in every point of ſpace. And is it not evident, that the Planets, by Reflexion, return their Light to the Sun, and that there is a conſtant mutual communication of Light between the Sun and the Fix'd Stars? And therefore, by both theſe ways, why may there not be a conſtant ſupply of luminous Matter, in proportion to that which is emitted? For tho' the Planets do not return ſo much as they receive; yet as this loſs would be ſmall, ſo it may be made up by the Light tranſmitted to the Sun from the Fix'd Stars; for if moſt, or many of the Stars, ſhould have no Planets in their Orbits, tho' the Sun ſhould return to them as much Light as he receives from them; yet a conſtant circulation of luminous Matter may be maintained with little diminution. And whatever

the

the diminution be, it may be ſupplyed by the Matter, which muſt be attracted by ſo vaſt Bodies as the Sun and Stars are, and become immediately inflamed and added to the Maſs of Light.

V. Tho' this Earth be but ſmall, in compariſon of the ambient Heavens, yet the Inhabitants of it, from the beginning of the World to this time, have been exceeding numerous, and may be ſtill vaſtly more numerous before the end of it. And we muſt conſider the Earth, not as it is at one particular Time, but as it is the Seat of Mankind, and the Habitation of all Generations for all Succeſſions of Ages. And under this Notion, the Earth is no ſuch contemptible place, tho' it be very ſmall, in reſpect of the Heavens that ſurround it. Nor is it ſtrange that the material World, how capacious ſoever it be, ſhould be made for Mankind, to whom the Angels are *Miniſtring Spirits*, and for whom the Son of God himſelf was pleaſed to die.

VI. There are few or none of the Planets, but what by reaſon of their too near or too remote diſtance from the Sun, ſeem incapable of being inhabited. M. *Huygens* in his *Conjectures concerning the Planetary Worlds*, ſays, that this [c] Water of our Earth would in *Saturn* and *Jupiter* be frozen up immediately, and in *Venus* and *Mercury* it would be evaporated; and he concludes, that every Planet muſt have its *Waters* of ſuch a Temper, as to be proportioned to its Heat; *Jupiter*'s and *Saturn*'s muſt be of ſuch a Nature, as not to be liable to Froſt, and *Venus*'s and *Mercury*'s of ſuch, as not to be eaſily evaporated by the Sun. He ſays, [d] That the Heat of the Sun is nine times greater in *Mercury* than with us; in *Venus* it is twice as hot as with us, the Light and Heat in *Mars* is twice, and ſometimes threefold leſs than ours. If there were any Inhabitants in *Jupiter*, they would have but the five and twentieth part of the Light and Heat

[c] Lib. 1. [d] Lib. 2.

that we receive from the Sun, and thoſe in *Saturn* but the hundredth part. Upon which account, he is very hard put to it to furniſh out Inhabitants for the reſt of the Planets: but as for the Moon and the Satellites moving about *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, he does as good as give up the Cauſe, by reaſon that they have neither Seas, nor Rivers, nor Clouds, nor Atmoſphere or Vapours, nor any kind of *Water*. Beſides, that the time of Light and Darkneſs in the Moon being equal to fifteen of our Days, if the Bodies of the Inhabitants were ſuch as ours are, he obſerves, that thoſe who had the Sun pretty high in their Horizon, muſt be like to be burnt up in ſuch long days, and thoſe that liv'd under the Poles of the Moon, would be as much pinch'd with Cold, as our *Whale-fiſhers* are about *Iſeland*, and *Nova Zembla*, in the Summer-time. And the Summer and Winter in the Moons or Satellites of *Saturn*, are fifteen Years long; and therefore they may well be concluded to be unhabitable.

But becauſe it may be alledg'd, that the ſame thing was believed of the Frigid and Torrid Zones, before Experience convinced Men of their miſtake; and that, however, there may be other Planets or Earths yet undiſcovered, at convenient diſtances from ſome of the Fix'd Stars: I obſerve, that tho' it ſhould be granted, that ſome Planets be habitable, it doth not therefore follow, that they muſt be actually inhabited, or that ever they have been. For they might be deſign'd, if Mankind had continued in Innocency, as Places for Colonies to remove Men to, as the World ſhould have encreaſed, either in Reward to thoſe that had excell'd in Vertue and Piety, to entertain them with the Proſpect of new and better Worlds; and ſo by degrees, to advance them in proportion to their Deſerts, to the height of Bliſs and Glory in Heaven; or as a neceſſary Reception for Men (who would then have been immortal) after the Earth had been full of Inhabitants. For as the Fruit of the Tree of Life was deſigned

deſigned for *Adam*, if he had kept his State of Innocence, which he was not ſuffered to taſte of after his Fall. For as God deſigned that Men ſhould have been immortal, if they had not ſinned, and that the Earth ſhould have continued as it was at firſt created, without either the Curſe which was denounced for the Tranſgreſſion of our firſt Parents, or the Flood, which deſtroyed the old World; tho' he foreſaw both the Fall, and the future degeneracy of Mankind: ſo he might have deſigned the Planets for theſe uſes, if Men had retained their Integrity, tho' he certainly knew, that they would not retain it. And ſince the Fall and Mortality of Mankind, they may be either for Manſions of the Righteous, or places of Puniſhment for the Wicked, after the Reſurrection, according as it ſhall pleaſe God, at the end of this World, to new modifie and transform them. And in the mean time, being placed at their reſpective diſtances, they do by their ſeveral Motions contribute to keep the World at a Poiſe, and the ſeveral Parts of it at an *Æquilibrium* in their Gravitation upon each other, by Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Principles. According to his Principles likewiſe of Attraction and Gravitation, the conjunction of the Planets, muſt have ſome effect upon our Earth, and upon each other, tho' not poſſible perhaps to be reduced to any certain Rules of Obſervation. It is acknowledged, that Comets cannot be habitable by reaſon of the prodigious Heat which they contract by approaching the Sun; and yet, what Uſes with any certainty have been aſſigned them? It ſeems to be, of late, agreed by Philoſophers, that the vaſt Quantity of Moiſture in the Atmoſphere of Comets, muſt cauſe Changes in our Air; but they are of different Opinions, whether this be for the better or for the worſe. And indeed, they may be a natural Means in the hand of Providence, of beſtowing Bleſſings, or inflicting Puniſhments: And if Planets may ſerve the ſame ends without being made Places of Habitation, there is no

reaſon to conclude, that they are inhabited. And beſides other Uſes, which may be found out hereafter, one very conſiderable has been already made of the *Satellites*, for the benefit of the World, in rectifying Geography, and determining the Longitude of Places. [e] *M. Caſſini* has drawn up Tables for this purpoſe, and written a Treatiſe on the Subject. And the [f] *Miſſionaries*, by their Obſervations, have diſcovered, that the Empire of *China* is Five hundred Leagues nearer *Europe*, than *Geographers* have placed it.

VII. It has been ſuggeſted by [g] Learned Men, that the Planets may poſſibly be inhabited by rational Creatures of a different nature from Mankind: their Souls may be of an inferior or ſuperior Order to ours, and their Bodies of a different Form and Compoſition, and there may be different Laws of Union and Communication between the Operations of their Souls and the Motions of their Bodies: For there is no neceſſity to believe, that there can be no ſort of rational Animals but Mankind.

But I offer moſt of what I have ſaid on this Subject, only as Conjectures, which have at leaſt ſo much probability in them, as to ſilence the Objections brought againſt the Scriptures on theſe Accounts. For unleſs a Man can prove theſe or the like Conjectures falſe, which I am perſuaded no Man can ever do, he muſt forbear urging Objections that will be inſignificant, if theſe Conjectures, or ſuch as theſe, ſhould be true. It is as hard to aſſign every particular End and Uſe of many other wonderful Things in Nature, but lately diſcovered by Microſcropes, as of any thing obſervable in the Heavens, either by the naked Eye, or by Teleſcopes. And when the Scriptures mention thoſe Uſes of the heavenly Bodies, which

[e] Philoſ. Burgund. Tom. 5. c. 8. Diſſert.
[f] Le Compte's *Memoirs*, p. 15. *and* 505.
[g] *Campanella*, Bp. *Wilkins*, *Huygens*, &c.

more immediately concern our Earth, this doth not deny or exclude any other Uſes, for which they may be deſign'd.

CHAP. XI.

That there is nothing in the Scriptures which contradicts the late Diſcoveries in Natural Philoſophy.

I. IT has been well obſerved by divers Writers upon this Subject, that the Scriptures were written with no deſign of teaching us Natural Philoſophy, but to inſtruct us in the Knowledge of God, and of our ſelves; to teach us our Duty, and ſhew us the way to live and die well: and therefore they might make uſe of popular Expreſſions and Forms of Speech, neither affirming nor denying the Philoſophical Truth of them, but intending them only in that Senſe and Meaning, which was their ſole deſign in uſing them. All proverbial Sayings, and metaphorical Expreſſions, by way of Illuſtration or Ornament, muſt be taken from received Notions; but they are not therefore aſſerted in the Philoſophical Senſe by him who uſeth them, any more than the Hiſtorical Truth of Parables and Similitudes is ſuppoſed to be aſſerted. And to have made uſe only of Philoſophical Terms and Notions, and have rectified the vulgar Conceptions of Men concerning all the *Phænomena*, which upon occaſion are made mention of in the Scriptures, would have required a large Syſtem of Philoſophy, which had made the Scriptures a Book unfit for vulgar Capacities, and for the uſe of the greateſt part of thoſe for whom they are deſigned. This Theory of Nature would beſides, have ſeemed as ſtrange and incredible to moſt Men, even as Miracles can do. For there is hardly any thing that Men unacquainted with Philo-

ſophy, are more ſtartled at than Philoſophical Diſcoveries. How incredible doth the Motion of the Earth, and the Reſt of the Sun, ſeem to all Men but Philoſophers? who are generally now agreed in it, whilſt the Riſing and Setting of the Sun, are Expreſſions now as much in uſe with ſuch as hold the Earth's Motion, as with others: And indeed they muſt ſpeak ſo, if they will be underſtood; and excepting this one Inſtance, which is and ever will be in uſe according to the vulgar Conception in all Countries and Languages, notwithſtanding any Philoſophical Diſcoveries; I know nothing in the Scriptures, which is not conſiſtent with the preſent Notions of Philoſophy.

II. And yet that place of Scripture, which is moſt objected on this Occaſion, is ſo expreſs'd, as that no Advantage can be taken againſt it. *Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon*, Joſh. x. 12. Stand thou ſtill, or as we read in the Margin, Be thou *ſilent*; be ſtill, do not interrupt our Victories, and take part with the Enemy, by withdrawing thy Light, and favouring his Eſcape. And again, *ver.* 13. *The Sun ſtood ſtill* (or was ſilent) *and the Moon ſtaid*; where the Word applied to the Moon, ſignifies properly to ſtay or ſtand ſtill; but the Word uſed concerning the Sun is metaphorical, as if it had been purpoſely ſo ordered, becauſe the Moon moves, but the Sun only ſeems to do ſo: which is farther confirmed by the following part of the ſame *Verſe*, where, in the Citation from the Book of *Jaſher*, the ſame Word is uſed of the Sun, which was before uſed of the Moon, ſignifying that the Sun properly ſtood ſtill. For the Book of *Jaſher* is cited in its own words; but when *Joſhua*, who wrote by Inſpiration, ſet down the words of the Holy Spirit, he expreſs'd the thing ſo, that it cannot be from thence inferr'd, that the Sun muſt be ſuppoſed to move, but rather the contrary; tho' immediately after, in a Citation from another Book, he inſerts the Expreſſion of an Author, who

who had follow'd the vulgar Opinion. However, as ſome have obſerv'd, the Motion of the Earth being caus'd by the Sun's Motion upon his own Axis, this Motion of the Sun might for that time ceaſe, and thereby both the Sun and the Earth, as well as the Moon might ſtand ſtill. The ſame Words which *Joſhua* uſed, is tranſlated to *wait upon*, and *wait for*, Pſal. lxii. 1. lxv. 1. So that all which can be concluded from the Word is, that the Sun attended, he lengthned the Day, and waited for the Victory, or waited upon the Army of *Iſrael*.

III. *Gen.* i. 6. *And God ſaid, Let there be a Firmament in the midſt of the Waters.* The Word tranſlated *Firmament* is in the Margin rendred *Expanſion*, by which ſeems to be meant this Orb, in which the Earth is placed, and by the Waters *above the Firmament* or Expanſion, may be meant the Waters beyond the Circumference of our Orb, and belonging to the Planets; and by the Waters *under the Firmament*, may be underſtood the Waters belonging to the Earth, and contain'd within its Expanſion. For at firſt all was one confus'd Heap of Waters, without any Diſtinction of Orbs; the Maſs of Waters being extended throughout, before the ſeveral Orbs were appointed; but then the Waters belonging to each Orb were caus'd to ſubſide towards their ſeveral Centers, till they being gather'd together in their proper Channels and Receptacles, the dry Land appear'd.

I confeſs I once thought this had been only an Explication of my own, but I have ſince found, that it is of equal Date with the Modern Philoſophy, and that it has likewiſe been lately uſed by others. Indeed it ſeems to be ſo eaſy an Expoſition, that I believe it would come into moſt Mens Minds, who would conſider how this Text may be explain'd according to the New Philoſophy. Others ſuppoſe the *Firmament* to ſignifie only the Region of the Air, and by the Waters *above the Firmament*, they underſtand

the Vapours contain'd in the Clouds. *When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of Waters in the Heavens, and he cauſeth the Vapours to aſcend from the ends of the Earth*, Jer. x. 13.

IV. The Sun and Moon are call'd *Two great Lights*, Gen. i. 16. But this doth not imply that either of them is greater than the fix'd Stars, which are not ſpoken of till the latter end of the Verſe. But the Sun is the *great Light* that *rules the day*, and the Moon the *great Light* that *rules the night*, the Moon being in reſpect of the Light which ſhe gives us, bigger than any fix'd Star; for ſhe gives us more Light than they do, in ſome ſenſe, however; and with reſpect to us, the Moon is the greater Light, though the Stars are the greater Luminous Bodies, and are call'd *great Lights*, *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 7, 9. Conſider this Luminary, as it concerns us, and it is in that conception greater than the biggeſt Star. Yet the Sun and the Moon are not ſaid to be greater Lights than the fix'd Stars, nor as great as they are; but are only called great Lights, which they certainly are, though every Star ſhould be bigger than either of them. The Stars are plainly ſpoken of by themſelves, and apart from the Sun and Moon, without any Compariſon or Relation to them. *And God made two great Lights, the greater Light to rule the Day, and the leſſer Light to rule the Night: He made the Stars alſo:* That is, beſides the two great Lights, which are the Sun and Moon, he made the Stars, which are diſtinguiſh'd from theſe, and not reckon'd with them, but are ſpoken of by way of Parentheſis. The Stars being of another Diviſion of Celeſtial Bodies, and belonging to other Orbs, are mention'd here diſtinctly, and not with any Compariſon to the Sun and Moon: But will any Man deny that the Sun and Moon are great Lights, becauſe the Stars are great Lights too, and as big perhaps as the Sun, and bigger than the Moon? There are in *Europe* many great Cities, and there are great Cities likewiſe

wiſe in other parts of the World: Doth therefore he that ſays there are Cities in *Europe* to *rule* the Neighbouring Countries and Cities in other parts of the World, alſo ſay, That the Cities of *Europe* are greater than any Cities in the reſt of the World? Or if any one ſhould ſay, God made four great Rivers to water Paradiſe, and Rivers in other places alſo, would he thereby affirm, that the Rivers of Paradiſe were larger than all the Rivers in the World beſides?

V. 1 *Sam.* ii. 8. We read of the *Pillars of the Earth*; but this is ſpoken metaphorically, and by Pillars of the Earth may be meant the Power of the Princes of the World, mention'd but juſt before. In the like ſenſe it is ſaid, *Pſal.* lxxv. 3. *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are diſſolved: I bear up the pillars of it.* [a] *Maimonides* ſtyles *Abraham* the Pillar of the World; and the [b] Humble and Poor in Spirit are by the Jews ſaid to ſupport the World. We find mention made of the Pillars of the Earth, *Job* ix. 6. which is to be underſtood of the Earth's unmoveable Stability, [c] as St. *Jerom* obſerves, and ſo the other Texts may likewiſe be underſtood. *Thou haſt eſtabliſhed the earth and it abideth*, (Pſal. cxix. 90.) or, as in the *Hebrew*, it *ſtandeth*; and to expreſs the durable Firmneſs of the Earth the more emphatically, it is ſaid to ſtand upon Pillars. By the Pillars of the Heavens, *Job* xxvi, 11. we are to underſtand that Power which ſupports and upholds them.

VI. *Job* xxxvii. 18. The Sky is ſaid to be *ſtrong, and as a Molten Looking-glaſs*, that is, to be durable, and reſembling a molten Looking-glaſs. Looking-glaſſes in ancient times being made of Braſs, or other Metal, *Exod.* xxxviii. 8. But however they be taken,

[a] De Idololatr. §. v. c. 1.
[b] Queſt. in Lib. Reg. inter Hieron. Opera, ad 1 Sam. i. 16.
[c] Columnas hoc loco pro ſtabilitate terræ intelligamus, quam Deus ſuper ſemetipſam immobiliſſimâ mole fundavit. S. Hieron. ad Job ix. 6.

theſe are the Words of *Elihu*: And *Job*'s Friends ſin'd in what they charg'd him withal, and therefore he may be ſuppoſed to make ſo innocent a miſtake, as to think the Heavens ſolid, or at leaſt, he as well as the reſt might ſpeak the Language of thoſe that did think ſo.

VII. *Job* ſpeaks ſtrictly according to Philoſophy, when he ſaith, *that God hangeth the Earth upon Nothing*, *Job* xxvi. 7. And we read, *Pſal.* xxiv. 2. that the Lord *hath founded the Earth upon the Seas, and eſtabliſhed it upon the Floods*, and, *Pſal.* civ. 5. that he hath *laid the Foundations of the Earth, that it ſhould not be removed for ever.* All which is as exactly expreſs'd as any Philoſopher can ſpeak. For the Foundation of a pendulous Globe can be nothing but its Center, upon which all the parts lean and are ſupported thereby. And the Waters continually flowing through the Bowels and Concavities of the Earth from the Depths of the Sea, by a conſtant Courſe and Circulation, conſtitute an Abyſs of Waters in the lowermoſt parts of the Earth. *All the rivers run into the ſea; yet the ſea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again*, Eccleſ. i. 7. So that with great Propriety of Speech, the Terraqueous Globe is ſaid to hang upon nothing, and the Earth to be founded upon the Seas, and eſtabliſhed upon the Floods; and, *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 6. to be *ſtretched out above the Waters.*

Theſe are the places of Scripture, which as far as I have obſerv'd, have been moſt excepted againſt in this particular; and yet there is nothing in them but what may be accounted for upon the Principles of Modern Philoſophy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of Man's being created capable of Sin and Damnation.

IT is ſufficient to prove the Reaſonableneſs of God's Proceedings with Mankind, if none are puniſh'd, but thoſe that deſerve Puniſhment, and none puniſh'd more than they deſerve; and all are rewarded, who by a faithful and ſincere, though but a very imperfect Obedience are become qualify'd for a Reward. God can do nothing but what is perfectly juſt, and infinitely merciful; and we muſt be very unreaſonable, if we cavil at his Proceedings, which are conſiſtent not only with Juſtice and Equity, but with Mercy it ſelf. For where neither his Juſtice, nor his Mercy and Goodneſs interpoſe, we muſt ſurely acquieſce in the Divine Pleaſure, unleſs we can think that God himſelf ſhould be more confin'd in his Actions than Men are: For within the Limits of Juſtice and Mercy, it is certainly left at the liberty of every Man in any Office or Authority, to do as he thinks fit. Yet as God is pleas'd in his dealings with Men, to appeal to their own Reaſon for the Equity of them, ſo there is nothing in all his Proceedings with us, but it may be made appear to be more reaſonable, even according to the Notion that we have of things, than the contrary would have been.

It muſt be conſider'd, that no created Being can, in its own Nature, be uncapable of Sin or Default: Becauſe it cannot be infinitely perfect; for it is inſeparable from all Creatures to have but finite Perfections; and whatever has Bounds ſet to its Perfections, is in ſome reſpect imperfect, that is, it wants thoſe Perfections which a Being of infinite Perfections alone can have. So that Imperfection is imply'd in the very Eſſence

Eſſence of created Beings, and what is imperfect may make Default. All inanimate things may deviate from the regular Courſe of their Natures, as they would certainly do, if the Divine Wiſdom and Power did not guide and maintain them in it.

And every rational Being muſt naturally have a liberty of Choice, that is, it muſt have a Will to chuſe, as well as an Underſtanding to reaſon: For we have no Notion how there can be Reaſon without Choice. A Faculty of Underſtanding without a Will to determine it, if left to itſelf, muſt always think of the ſame Object, or proceed in a continued Series and Connexion of Thoughts, without any Aim or End, which would be a perpetual Labour in vain, and tedious Thoughtfulneſs to no purpoſe: But, if it ſhould be ſometimes determined by ſomething External to new Objects; yet, what Uſe of Reaſon could there be in Contemplations, which were merely obtruded and forced upon the Mind?

And becauſe rational Creatures muſt have ſome preſcribed Rule of their Actions, from which being free Agents, they may depart; they muſt in their own Nature be capable of Sin. God is infinite Perfection, and therefore is a Rule to himſelf, and his Eſſence is uncapable of any other Rule of his Actions; he only acts according to his Eſſence, from which it is impoſſible for him to vary. But the moſt perfect Creatures muſt act by a Rule, which is not eſſential to them, but preſcribed them by God, and is not ſo intrinſick to their Natures, but that they may decline from it, for a Free Agent may follow or not follow the Rule appointed, or elſe it would not be free.

The Difficulty therefore is not, why Man was created capable of Sinning; for he could not poſſibly by his Creation and in his Nature be uncapable of it; this is peculiar to God, who is infinite Perfection, that all Sin ſhould be a Contradiction to his very Nature and Eſſence. But the Queſtion which has been

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ſtarted by ſome Men, if they ſtate it right, muſt be this, How it came to paſs, that God did not ſuſtain and preſerve Men by an irreſiſtible Power from falling into Sin, when Damnation was to be the Conſequence of it? In anſwer to which, it might ſuffice to ſay, that in the Creation God muſt be ſuppoſed to act by His Divine Prerogative, and by His arbitrary Will and Power; *He giveth no account of any of his Matters*, Job xxxiii. 13. but it is enough for us to know, that he made Man happy, and capable of continuing happy, and that there could be no neceſſity, why he ſhould force him to continue ſo. Though we want not in the mean time Reaſons to prove, even to our weak and imperfect Underſtandings, that it was expedient that the Happineſs or Miſery of Man ſhould depend upon his own Choice, rather than that he ſhould be kept unavoidably from all Sin, and be placed out of all poſſibility of Puniſhment and Miſery. I. Becauſe the Glory of God is hereby more advanc'd, and all the Attributes of his Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs are more diſplay'd, than if Men had been inevitably reſtrain'd from ſinning. II. Becauſe this conduceth more to the Happineſs of the Bleſſed, than a Neceſſity of not ſinning could have done.

I. The Glory of God is more advanced, and the Attributes of his Wiſdom and his Juſtice, and of his Goodneſs it ſelf are more diſplay'd by leaving Men to a Freedom of acting, than they could have been by impoſing an inevitable Fate and Neceſſity of not ſinning upon Mankind. It is for the Glory of God to be obey'd by his Creatures acting according to their Natural Powers and Capacities, rather than to create them with a Faculty, which would never have been enjoy'd, but would have always been under ſuch a Reſtraint upon Humane Nature, as muſt have been, if Men had never been ſuffer'd to have any Uſe or Trial of their Freedom of Will. And unleſs Man had been left capable of ſinning againſt God, he could not have been

been in a Capacity of paying him a true and proper Obedience: for Obedience ſuppoſeth Choice, and Choice ſuppoſeth a Poſſibility of Diſobedience. To obey God in proper ſpeaking, is to chuſe to do what God has commanded, to ſubmit to his Will, and to reſolve to do what we know to be pleaſing to Him, upon that very Reaſon and Conſideration, becauſe we know it to be His Pleaſure; not becauſe the Neceſſity of our own Nature, or ſome over-ruling Power forceth us upon it. The Obedience of rational Creatures, ſuppoſing them from their firſt Creation out of all poſſibility of ſinning, would be no other, than that of the irrational and inanimate Beings, and a Man then could be no more truly ſaid to obey God in acting as God has appointed, than a Stone may be ſaid to obey him in falling downward, or the Fire in aſcending: Theſe act according to God's Appointment, and ſo would Man, if he acted upon Neceſſity; but it is an Honour and Homage due to God from rational Creatures, that they ſhould determine themſelves to do as he has commanded, and make a free Acknowledgment of his Bounty and Goodneſs, and pay a voluntary Submiſſion to the Divine Authority, which is their *reaſonable Service.*

The Wiſdom of God is, and will be eſpecially at the Day of Judgment, more conſpicuous by the Government of a wicked World, than it would have been, if all Men had been forcibly kept from doing wickedly. To reſtrain the Paſſions, and over-rule all the Vices of Men, and ſet bounds to them; to bring Good out of Evil, and by unexpected ways and methods to lead Men to Repentance, and to appoint and bring to paſs the whole Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, by which the Treaſures and Myſteries of the Divine Wiſdom are reveal'd, and ſuch things are diſcover'd, as even the Angels themſelves *deſire to look into*, (1 Pet. i. 12.) this magnifies the Wiſdom of God much more than the State of Men uncapable of Sin could have done.

done. There is much more Wiſdom ſhewn in governing Free Agents, than in governing by Fate and Neceſſity; and more Wiſdom in making the worſt Actions as inſtrumental and ſerviceable to the purpoſes of Holineſs and Goodneſs, as the beſt could have been, than in not ſuffering them to be; and more in redeeming Man, than in keeping him by force in ſuch a condition, as to ſtand in no need of Redemption.

All the Divine Attributes are much more magnified by the Incarnation of the Son of God for the Redemption of Man, than they could have been, if he had never fallen: The Love of God is manifeſted in a more wonderful manner, by ſending his own Son to die for us; his Juſtice in requiring Satisfaction, and his Wiſdom, and Truth, and Faithfulneſs, in recovering Man from his miſerable Condition, and perfecting the Deſign of his Creation, in deſpight of his Diſobedience.

It is the Mercy of God to ſave them that are ſaved; but his Juſtice is executed only upon the Wicked; and why ſhould we think it reaſonable, that God ſhould debar himſelf the Exerciſe of one of his Attributes rather than puniſh ſuch Men, as thro' their own Obſtinacy will periſh? Juſtice is as much a Perfection of God as Mercy is; and tho' it may ſeem terrible to us, yet it is as reaſonable in it ſelf, that wicked Men ſhould periſh, as that the righteous ſhould be ſaved: And God acts upon Principles of infinite Reaſon and Wiſdom, without any mixture of Paſſion. Therefore I demand, Is it reaſonable or not, that the wicked ſhould ſuffer? And if it be, why ſhould not God act according to his own Attributes, and the true Reaſons of Things, rather than by our weak and fond Paſſions? Since there is infinite Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Mercy, in God's Proceedings, it cannot be conceived, why the Ruine which many Men will bring upon themſelves, ſhould either alter or hinder the Divine Counſels and Decrees.

II. A freedom of Choice conduceth more to the Happineſs of the Bleſſed, than a neceſſity of not ſinning could have done. The Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in the Love and Enjoyment of God; but Love is never ſo great, nor ſo ſenſible an Happineſs, as when there has been ſome Tryal and Experience in the proof of it. And it muſt advance the Happineſs both of Angels and Men in Heaven, that upon choice and tryal, they have preferr'd God before all things, and upon that, find themſelves confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd in the perpetual and unalterable love and enjoyment of him. This very conſideration, that they might once have fallen from his Love, inſpires them with the higheſt Ardors of Love, when they rejoice in the infinite Rewards of ſo eaſie and ſhort a Tryal: and the Reflection upon the Dangers eſcaped, heightens even the Joys of Heaven it ſelf to them, and makes an Addition to every degree of Bliſs. The remembrance of their paſt Sins and Temptations, and the ſenſe of their own Unworthineſs ariſing from that remembrance, will continually excite in the Bleſſed freſh Acts of Love and Adoration of God, who has raiſed them above all Sin and Temptation, and fix'd them in an everlaſting State of Bliſs and Glory. The Tryal that the Righteous underwent here, makes up ſome part of their Happineſs in Heaven; and in what degree ſoever their Happineſs can be ſuppoſed to be, yet it is in ſome meaſure encreaſed, and, as it were, endeared to them, by reflecting upon their former State of Tryal, in which they were ſubject to Temptation and Sin.

The Love, and Praiſes, and Adorations of the Father, for ſending his Son, and accepting his Ranſom; of the Son, as our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer; and of the Holy Ghoſt, as our Guide and Conductor to Heaven; muſt ſuppoſe, that we needed a Ranſom and a Redeemer, and the Grace and Influence of the Holy Ghoſt; that is, we muſt have been capable of Sin

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and Miſery, or elſe we had wanted theſe Motives to the Love of God, which the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel affords, and which will make up the Happineſs of Heaven to us. Creatures cannot comprehend the Divine Eſſence, but they know and love God, according as he manifeſts himſelf to them; and therefore that Diſpenſation, which doth moſt manifeſt the Love, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of God, doth moſt conduce to the Glory of God, and the Happineſs of Men. The Bleſſed ſhall ſee God *face to face*, they ſhall enjoy his Preſence, and partake of his Glory, and in this their Happineſs will conſiſt; but the Love of God is not only the neceſſary conſequence of this Beatifick Viſion, but it is antecedently neceſſary to qualifie us for it; and the more any Soul is inflamed with the Divine Love, the fuller and more perfect Viſion of God we muſt ſuppoſe it to enjoy. But Goodneſs is the Object of our Love, and not Goodneſs in the Idea ſo much, as Goodneſs extended to us: And as God's Goodneſs is more manifeſted in ſending his Son to atone for our Sins, than it could have been by exempting us from all poſſibility of Sinning; ſo our Love to him muſt be more ſtrongly excited, whereby the Soul is dilated, as it were, and made more receptive of the Communications of the Divine Eſſence in the Beatifick Viſion. As Faith is *made perfect by Works* proceeding from Love in this Life, and without Charity is nothing worth; ſo in the other World, where Faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in Viſion, Love muſt be that Power or Quality in the Soul, whereby we become capable of receiving the Divine Communications, and the more extenſive and boundleſs this is, the more happy we ſhall be; and therefore, whatever is moſt conducing to advance the Love of God in us, is the beſt means of our Salvation and future Happineſs.

The Motives which the Chriſtian Religion affords us, to the Praiſe and Love of God, will accompany

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us for ever to augment and improve the Happineſs, even of Heaven it ſelf, where *Charity never fails:* and it is not conceivable, how the Divine Love could have been ſo fully manifeſted, and ſet forth to us ſo gloriouſly, if Man had never fallen, but by repreſenting to him the danger of his Fall, and the gracious deſign of God towards him, ſuppoſing he had fallen. To have eſcaped Hell, and to find our ſelves in the unchangeable poſſeſſion of Salvation by the free Mercy and Goodneſs of God, and by the Death of his own Son, are Thoughts which muſt create a new Heaven, as it were, in Heaven it ſelf; I mean, they will enlarge our Souls to the utmoſt capacities of our Natures, and fill and actuate them with ſuch Divine Ardors of Love, as if we had been kept neceſſarily from all Sin, ſeem impoſſible to have been raiſed in us. The Angels themſelves *rejoice over one Sinner that repenteth*, and that Joy muſt have been wanting to them, who are of ſo much higher and more excellent a Nature than we are of, if there had been no poſſibility either of Sin, or of Repentance. And the wonderful Diſpenſation of the Goſpel is an eternal Subject of Praiſe and Adoration, an eternal Fountain of Love, and Joy, and Happineſs to all the Bleſſed Spirits in Heaven.

The more the Divine Attributes are diſplayed, the more adorable the Majeſty of God will appear, and will become the greater Object of our Praiſe and Veneration; thoſe that are wiſe and good, will be made the wiſer and better by it, and the happier in the Contemplation of the Divine Perfections, and in the ſenſe and experience, that they have been all continually employed for their benefit, that the moſt unlikely Accidents have conſtantly tended to the advantage of them that love God, *and all things have worked together for their good.* Now a Governour in his Laws, and in the Method and Order of his Government, has regard chiefly to the Good and Obedient, and has little concern for the reſt. And we muſt conſider God not only

only as the Father, but as the Governour of Mankind; and tho' an earthly Father, perhaps, would by all means poſſible, preſerve his Son from incurring Puniſhment, yet a good Governour, when the Ends of his Government can be better obtain'd by leaving him to his liberty, would not reſtrain him by any Force or Violence. Therefore, if the liberty of choice in Men, and the poſſibility of their Sin and Damnation be for the Glory of God, and for the benefit of good Men, and be no injury to the bad; this is a ſufficient Account, why Man was not neceſſarily reſtrained from Sinning, tho' Damnation be the conſequence of it.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Fall of the Angels, and of our Firſt Parents.

IN the Beginning God created every thing perfect in its kind, and endued the Angels and Man with all intellectual and moral Perfections ſuitable to their reſpective Natures: but ſo as to leave them capable of ſinning. For it pleaſed the infinite Wiſdom of God (for the Reaſons already alledg'd, and for many more, and greater Reaſons perhaps than any Man is able to imagine) to place them in a ſtate of Tryal, and to put it to their own choice, whether they would ſtand in their preſent condition of Innocence and Happineſs, in which they were created, or fall into Sin and Miſery. We have little or no account in the Scriptures of the Cauſe or Temptation, which occaſioned the Fall of Angels, becauſe it doth not concern us to be acquainted with it; and therefore, it little becomes us to be inquiſitive about it. Indeed, it is very difficult to conceive, how Beings of ſo great Knowledge and Purity, as the Fallen Angels once were of, ſhould fall into Sin: But it muſt be conſidered, that nothing is

more unaccountable than the Motives and Cauſes of Action in Free Agents: when any Being is at liberty to do as it will, no other Reaſon beſides its own Will need be enquir'd for, of its Actings. What is liable to Sin, may ſin, whatever the Motive be; and to enquire after the Motive, is to enquire what Motives may determine a Free Agent, that is, an Agent, which may determine it ſelf upon any Ground or Motive.

But how perfect and excellent ſoever any Creature is, unleſs it be ſo confirmed and eſtabliſhed in a ſtate of Purity and Holineſs, as to be ſecured from all poſſibility of Sinning, it may be ſuppoſed to admire it ſelf, and dote upon its own Perfections and Excellencies, and by degrees, to neglect, and not acknowledge God the Author of them, but to ſin and rebel againſt him. And it is moſt agreeable both to Scripture and Reaſon, that Pride was the cauſe of the Fall of Angels. For thoſe Excellencies which might ſecure them from any other Sin, proved a Temptation to this; and the greater their Perfections were, the greater was the Temptation; as in a Man who is guilty of Spiritual and Phariſaical Pride, all that is good and commendable in him, affords him only matter for his Sin. So that where there is a freedom of Will, and a poſſibility of Sinning, the very Perfection of Nature in a Creature may be made an occaſion to ſin; and that which excludes other Sins, may prove a Motive and Temptation to Pride, which therefore we have reaſon to conclude, was the Sin of the Fallen Angels.

As to the Fall of Man, however the thing may be diſputed, the Effects of it are viſible in the ſtrange proneneſs of humane Nature, to act againſt Reaſon and Conſcience, that is, to act in plain contradiction to it ſelf, and its own Principles. This is a ſtate in which it cannot be ſuppoſed that Mankind was at firſt created by the infinitely Good and Holy God. And the moſt plauſible Opinion, and that which has moſt generally obtained among the *Heathens*, is, that the

the Souls of Men had a Being before they came into this World, and were ſent into humane Bodies, in puniſhment for what they had done amiſs in a precedent ſtate. But this is mere ſuſpicion and conjecture, without any poſſibility of proof; and there is this plain Reaſon againſt it, that no Man can be puniſhed for his Amendment, who knows nothing of it. For it is inconſiſtent with the nature and end of Puniſhment, that the Offender ſhould not be made ſenſible of his Fault, eſpecially when the Puniſhment is deſigned for his Amendment, as it is ſaid to be in the preſent caſe.

It has been the conſtant Opinion of thoſe Philoſophers, who have held a Pre-exiſtence of Souls, that after their departure out of this Life, Men remember what they did here: And if, notwithſtanding, it can be ſuppoſed, that Men may poſſibly retain no remembrance of what they did in another ſtate, before this Life, yet if their Faults were not kept in memory, they ſhould be brought to their remembrance, or there ſhould be ſome authentick Revelation to inform Men, in general terms, that their Condition in this World had reſpect to a former ſtate, if this Life were deſigned as a ſtate of Puniſhment in order to Amendment. But the ſtate of this Life is ſo far from being thought a Puniſhment, that Men naturally are of nothing more fond, nor dread any thing more than to leave it. And tho' Men meet with great Afflictions here, yet theſe do not befal thoſe only or chiefly, who by their proneneſs to Evil in this Life, might be ſuppoſed to have been the greateſt Offenders in a former ſtate; and every Calamity has not the nature of Puniſhment. The Sufferings and Miſeries which we endure, by reaſon of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, are not ſo properly Puniſhments as the Effects and Conſequences of his Sin: But Perſonal Faults, ſuch as are ſuppoſed to have been committed in a ſtate of Pre-exiſtence, require a proper Puniſhment; and if the Puniſhment be for

Amendment, as it is ſuppoſed to be in this preſent ſtate, both the Fault and the Puniſhment muſt be known, with the Cauſe and End of its being inflicted; and the greateſt Offenders muſt undergo the ſevereſt Puniſhment. Beſides, if the [a] Soul were put into the Body, as into a Priſon, for Puniſhment, in order to be reclaimed from evil Habits contracted in a former ſtate; how comes it to paſs, that the Body concurs with the Soul in ſinning? that the Soul is ſeduced and enſnared by the carnal Appetites? and that the *Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*, cauſes it *to do that which it would not*, and to act againſt the Light and Convictions of its own Reaſon and Conſcience? Men are wont to be reſtrained from Sin by Puniſhment, not to be drawn into it; and it is a very improper way of correction for paſt Sins, to be expos'd to new ones. But the Soul becomes prone to Sin, by being join'd to the Body: it is plain therefore, that the Soul is not ſent into the Body to be puniſh'd for Sins paſt, and by that means to be reſtored to that Innocence and Pūrity, which it loſt in a former ſtate.

The Account which the Scripture gives us of the Fall of our Firſt Parents, may be conſidered, either, 1. in the Manner, or 2. in the Conſequences of it.

1. If we conſider the *Manner* of the Fall of our Firſt Parents. 1. *Eve* was beguiled by the Serpent, and *Adam* was enticed by her to eat the forbidden Fruit. 2. They both eating of it, thereby fell from their ſtate of Happineſs.

1. *Eve* was beguiled by the Serpent, and *Adam* was enticed by her. It is not to be ſuppoſed, but that the Devil would uſe all the means that the ſubtilty of his Malice could invent, to procure the Ruine of Mankind, and that therefore he would not only make uſe

[a] Εἰ γὰρ πρὸς κόλασιν τῇ ψυχῇ διὰ τ ἁμαρτίαν ἐδόθη τὸ σῶμα, ὥστε αὐτὴν ὀδυνωμένην παιδαγωγῆσαι πρὸς τὸ τιμᾶν τ θεὸν, πῶς συσπᾷ, καὶ συναγωνίζεται αὐτῇ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν; &c. Juſtinian. adv. Origen. C. T. 5. Col. 640.

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of inward Suggeſtions, but of outward Allurements alſo by a viſible Shape and Appearance. And if he had aſſum'd the ſhape of a Man or Woman, *Eve* knew that there was none of humane kind but *Adam* and her ſelf in the World, and therefore that Shape was leaſt of all proper for him to make uſe of. But if he had aſſum'd any other Shape, or made uſe of any other Creature as his Inſtrument, the ſame, or the like Objections might lie againſt it, that can be ſuppos'd againſt his beguiling *Eve* by a Serpent.

The Serpent's Subtilty made him the fitter Inſtrument for the Devil's Purpoſe, for all finite Agents can act no otherwiſe than as the matter they have to work withal will permit. It is ſuppoſed by a [b] Perſon of great Learning, that *Eve* was tempted by a fiery flying Serpent, ſuch as are ſtill ſeen in ſome Parts of the World, of great Brightneſs and Splendor, being ſtyled *Seraphims*, Num. xxi. 6, 8. Iſai. xiv. 29. which is a Name that denotes likewiſe one of the higheſt Orders of Angels; and he concludes that this fiery Serpent appear'd to *Eve* in ſuch a ſhining and beautiful Luſtre, as ſhe had ſeen Angels appear in before, and that it was miſtaken by her for an Angel. This Account has great Probability in it; but if it ſhould not be admitted, yet we may obſerve that ordinary Serpents were generally eſteem'd Sacred by the Heathens, as it is evident from the *Caduceus* of *Mercury*, and many other inſtances; the Sight of them was accounted a [c] good Omen, and the [d] *Genii* were painted under the Form of Serpents. It was [e] reported both of *Alexander* and *Scipio*, that they were begotten of *Jupiter* under the Shape of a Serpent, and [f] *Æſculapius* is ſaid to have aſſum'd that Form, when he was tranſported in the time of a great Plague, from *Epidaurus*

[b] *A. Bp.* Teniſon *of Idolatry*, Chap. xiv. [c] Val. Max. l. i. c. 6. Dio. l. xlvii. initio. Vopiſc. in Aureliano. Jul. capit. in Maximin. jun. [d] Perſ. Sat. i. Propert. l. iv. Eleg. 8. [e] Liv. l. xxvi. c. 19. [f] Val. Max. l. i. c. 8. Plin. Hiſt. l. xxix. c. 4.

to *Rome*. [g] Serpents were had in the greateſt Honour, and had Sacrifices made to them in the Worſhip of *Bacchus*, and a [h] Snake was portray'd round the *Tripos* of *Sibylla Erythræa*. The Story of [i] *Ophioneus* among the *Heathens* was taken from the Devil's aſſuming the Form or Body of a Serpent in his tempting of *Eve*, and the Hereticks call'd [k] *Ophitæ* worſhipp'd a Serpent: and to name no more inſtances, Serpents have commonly had Religious Worſhip paid them both by Ancient and [l] Modern Heathens. And if the Devil has been ſo generally worſhipp'd in the Form of a Serpent ſince the Fall, it can ſeem no incredible thing, that he ſhould by a Serpent deceive *Eve*. He ſeems to have prided himſelf in this manner of Worſhip, to inſult and trample upon fall'n Mankind, by cauſing himſelf to be adored under that very Form, by which he firſt wrought our Ruin; to which purpoſe *Clemens Alexandrinus* [m] obſerves, that in the Feaſts of *Bacchus*, they were wont to cry out Εὐοὰν, meaning, as he ſuppoſes, *Eve*. [n] *Lucretius* makes *Evan* a Denomination of *Bacchus*. The [o] Serpent was indeed the common Symbol and myſtick Repreſentation of the Heathen Deities. We know, that the *Babylonians* worſhipp'd a Dragon, from the Apocrypha; and that they had the Images of Serpents in the Temple of *Belus*, from [p] *Diodorus Siculus*. [q] Dragons are deſcrib'd to be of a beautiful ſhining Colour; and [r] *Philo* ſpeaking of the Serpent that beguiled *Eve*, calls it a Dragon. It is probable therefore, that ſhe

[g] Clem. Alex. Admonit. ad Gentes. Max. Tyr. Diſſert. xxxviii. [h] Apud Euſeb. Conſtant. Orat. c. xviii. [i] Orig. contr. Celſ. l. vi. & Spenceri not. ad loc. [k] Tertull. Præſcript. 37. [l] Joſ. Acoſt. l. v. c. 5, 12, 13. Martin. Hiſt. Sin. l. i. & iv. Boſman *of the Coaſt of* Guinea, *Lett.* xix. [m] Admonit. ad Gent. [n] Lib. v. [o] Juſtin. Mart. Apol. ad Antonin. Pium. [p] L. ii. c. 4.

[q] Lucan. l. ix.

Vos quoque, qui cunctis innoxia *Numina* Terris
Serpitis; aurato nitidi fulgore Dracones.

[r] De Agricult.

was

was tempted by one of this kind of Serpents, eſpecially ſince the Dragon is ſtyled, *that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan*, Rev. xii. 9. However, it can be no impoſſible thing, that *Eve* ſhould be deceiv'd once by a Creature, by which her Poſterity has been deceiv'd, even to the Worſhip of it in ſo many Ages and Countries ſince. The Speech of a Serpent could be no frightful thing to *Eve*, who knew not what Fear was before her Fall; and if it be thought abſurd (tho' it was ſo ſoon after her own Creation) that ſhe ſhould not know but that other Creatures might have the uſe of Speech as well as Man: Yet why might not ſhe attribute his Faculty of Speech to the Vertue of that Fruit, which he might be ſuppoſed to have taſted, and from his own Experience to recommend to her. So far is it from any Inconſiſtency or Improbability, that *Eve* ſhould be beguil'd by a Serpent; and when ſhe was once deceiv'd, it will not be deny'd but that *Adam* might be enticed by her.

2. The Sin committed by our firſt Parents was in eating the forbidden Fruit, and they both eating of it, fell thereby from their Primitive State of Happineſs. The time when our firſt Parents ſinn'd is uncertain, and therefore there is no ground for the Objection, which ſome have fram'd by crowding a long Series of things into the Buſineſs of one Day. Many Circumſtances are omitted in the Scriptures concerning the ſtate of our firſt Parents in Paradiſe, and relating to their Fall. For no more is mention'd than was needful to *Moſes*'s Deſign, which was to give a very brief Account of the moſt remarkable things that had paſt from the Creation to his own Times. It appears that our firſt Parents were no Strangers to the Preſence and Voice of God, and there is no reaſon to doubt but that they were fully inſtructed in the Terms propos'd to them, with the Reaſonableneſs of God's Commandments, how much depended upon their Obedience, what Danger they were in, and how eaſily they might

eſcape it, and become enſtated in everlaſting Innocence and Happineſs.

God had determin'd to make trial of them by propoſing an eaſy inſtance of their Obedience, and by forbidding them the uſe but of one Tree in Paradiſe: It was but a ſmall Reſtraint, and they had Ability enough to have overcome the greateſt Temptation; and Life and Death were ſet before them, as the Reward or Puniſhment of their Obedience or Diſobedience. Upon eating the forbidden Fruit, they muſt *ſurely die*; but if they had but refrain'd from it, another Tree was provided, the eating of which ſhould as certainly have made them Immortal, as this made them ſubject to Death: For then without ever undergoing Death, they ſhould have been tranſlated to a ſtate of more perfect Bliſs and Happineſs.

It cannot be deny'd, but that it was very fitting and reaſonable, that God ſhould lay ſome Reſtraint upon our firſt Parents, whereby he might be obey'd, and his Sovereignty acknowledg'd: And as no Law could be more eaſily obſerv'd than this, ſo it was moſt proper for the place in which they were, and for their manner of Life and ſtate of Innocence. The common Rules and Laws of Morality could then ſcarce have any place, but it was requiſite that this or ſome ſuch other inſtance of Obedience, ſhould be impoſed. Theft, and Murther, and Adultery, and other Sins againſt moral Duties, were then either impoſſible to be committed, or ſo unnatural, that it can hardly be imagined, how any of them ſhould be committed, when there were yet but two Perſons in the World, in a ſtate of perfect Innocence: and therefore in moral Duties there could be no Trial of the Obedience of our firſt Parents; beſides, theſe were ſo well known to them, that there could be no need of any Command concerning them. But God gives them a Command in a Thing of an indifferent Nature, that ſo he might have a plainer Proof of their Obedience, in a thing which

which was both indifferent of it ſelf, and ſo eaſy to them, that nothing but a careleſs and perverſe Neglect could betray them into Diſobedience.

To ſuppoſe Good and Evil to be in the Nature of Things only, and not in the Commandments and Prohibitions of God, is in effect, a renouncing of God's Authority; but this Tree was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: For it made them ſenſible of the Divine Authority upon which moral Good and Evil formally depend, tho' materially they be in the Nature of things: Whatever God is pleas'd to command or forbid, however indifferent it be in it ſelf, is for that very Reaſon, ſo far as it is commanded or forbidden by him, as truly Good or Evil, as if it were abſolutely and morally ſo, being enacted by the ſame Divine Authority, whereby all moral Precepts become obligatory as Laws to us: For all moral Truths, or Precepts, or Rules of Life, however certain and neceſſary in themſelves, yet receive the Obligation of Laws from the Divine Authority, this being the moſt certain Truth in Morality, and in Order of Nature antecedent to all others, that God is to be obey'd in all that he commands or forbids. But the Divine Authority was ſolely and purely concern'd in this Commandment, which had no Foundation in the Nature of Things, but depended merely upon the Will and Pleaſure of God, and by the Tranſgreſſion of this Law, it became notorious to our firſt Parents and their unhappy Poſterity, that both Good and Evil, whatever they may be in Speculation and abſtracted Notions, yet as they concern us in the Practice of our Lives, are to be reſolv'd ultimately into the Divine Authority; God is our Law-giver, and nothing can be a Law to us but by His enacting, and what he enacts muſt be a Law to us; and of the ſame neceſſary indiſpenſable Obligation, ſo far as he is pleas'd to enjoin it, whether it be a moral Precept, or only an indifferent thing in its own Nature. It ſeems then that

God

God was pleas'd to manifeſt his Sovereign Authority in this Commandment, and to ſhew that it is abſolute and independent upon moral Good or Evil; and that tho' his infinite Holineſs and Goodneſs would not permit him to command any thing contrary to moral Duties, nor ſuffer him not to command moral Good, and forbid moral Evil; yet his Authority is arbitrary over us, extending as far beyond all the Duties of Morality as he pleaſes, which indeed are only Truths and Precepts, but not Duties to us but by Vertue of his Authority. This Commandment therefore was given in Aſſertion of God's Authority, whom it is always and in every thing good to obey, and evil to diſobey, as our firſt Parents found by ſad Experience. [r] *Maimonides* obſerves, that they had the Knowledge of Truth and Falſhood before, but Good and Evil became known to them by their Fall, whereby they underſtood the Value of that Good which they had loſt, and were made ſenſible of the Miſery of that Condition, into which they had brought themſelves: They perceiv'd how good it was to obey God, and how evil to be diſobedient to Him in any thing whatſoever.

[s] Mr. *Mede* has obſerv'd that their Sin was Sacrilege. God had reſerv'd that Tree as holy to himſelf, in token of his Dominion aud Sovereignty, and appointed it to ſuch uſes as he had deſign'd it for: and therefore it was a Sacrilegious Prophanation to eat of it; it was a Theft or Robbery, no leſs than the *Robbing of God*, as the Prophet ſtyles Sacrilege, and an Invaſion of his Right.

And the Lord God ſaid, Behold the Man is become as one of us to know Good and Evil, Gen. iii. 22. which Words are generally ſuppoſed to have been ſpoken by a ſevere *Sarcaſm*, or with an upbraiding Anger and Indignation; but they ſeem to admit of an eaſier

[r] Maim. More Nevoch. P^r^ i. c. 2. [s] Lib. i. Diſc. xxvii.

Senſe,

Senſe, if they be thus interpreted; *The man is become as one of us*, he has made himſelf as one of us; he has aſſum'd to himſelf an Equality with us. Chriſt *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. to be equal is there to claim an Equality; and ſo to *become as one of us*, is to challenge or pretend to become as one of us, according to the Devil's Suggeſtion. Chriſt knew it to be no Injury or Preſumption in Himſelf, who was *in the form of God*, and was God as well as Man, to aſſume to Himſelf an Equality with the Father: But our firſt Parents, who were made *in the image of God* and *after his likeneſs*, were not contented with this, but affected ſomething higher than the Perfections of a Creature, and aim'd at an independent State of Wiſdom and Immortality, being ſeduced by the Serpent, who ſaid unto the Woman, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die; ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*, *Gen.* iii. 4, 5. This was a moſt heinous Crime to believe the Serpent rather than God himſelf, and to be ſeduced by him, and hope by his Advice to procure to themſelves Divine Wiſdom and Immortal Happineſs. Thus he apoſtatiz'd from God, as the Tempter himſelf had done. And indeed this is what the Words *ver.* 22. as they may be interpreted, will imply. For the Prepoſition or Particle, which is there rendred *of*, often ſignifies *from*, and is ſo rendred by our Tranſlators. [u] *He took from them Simeon*, Gen. xlii. 24. [x] *One went out from me*, Gen. xliv. 28. [y] *Separated you from the congregation*, Num. xvi. 9. In like manner, the Man is become as one *from us*, or *from among us*; as one of our heavenly Court and Retinue, who went out from among us, and apoſtatiz'd from us; that is, he is become like Satan, *to know good and evil*; Good by the want of Innocence, and

[u] וַיִּקַּח מֵאִתָּם אֶת־שִׁמְעוֹן *Gen.* xlii. 24.
[x] וַיֵּצֵא הָאֶחָד מֵאִתִּי *Gen.* xliv. 28.
[y] הִבְדִּיל אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל *Numb.* xvi. 9.

Evil

Evil by the Guilt and Burthen of it, upon his Conſcience.

II. The Conſequences of the Fall of our firſt Parents were anſwerable to their Crime, and were either upon themſelves, or upon their Poſterity, or upon the Serpent and other Creatures.

1. The Curſe upon the Serpent was by a viſible Object and Repreſentation, to denote that Curſe and Puniſhment which was denounced againſt the Tempter himſelf, who aſſum'd the Body of a Serpent. The Serpent before had a freer and ſtronger Motion, and could lift up himſelf and reach the Fruits of the Trees, but is ſince confin'd to the Ground, and is forced to ſeek his Food in the Duſt. And there being Relations of Serpents, which carry Part of their Body erect, this before the Curſe might belong to the whole kind of them in another manner, than it doth ſince to any one ſort. The Baſilisk is ſaid to go with his Head and Breaſt erect, and a Serpent call'd [z] in *Ceylon*, the *Noya*, will ſtand with half his Body upright for two or three hours together. [a] Dragons fly in *Africa*, where they are venomous, [b] but not in other places. [c] Theſe may be for Monuments of the Truth of the Curſe upon the reſt; as ſome of the Race of the Giants were left in the Land of *Canaan*, till *David*'s time, as a Memorial to the *Iſraelites* of the miraculous Power of God in the Conqueſt of the Land by their Forefathers.

The Curſe of the Ground was for a Puniſhment to *Adam* and his Poſterity, and can be conſider'd no otherwiſe, nor be made matter of Objection, unleſs it be thought unreaſonable to inflict a Curſe upon Mankind for this Offence of eating the forbidden Fruit, by making the Earth leſs fruitful and pleaſant to them. Though the Garden of *Eden* were the moſt delightful

[z] Knoxe's *Hiſt. of* Ceyl. P^t i. c. 7.
[a] Lucan. l. ix. v. 729.
[b] Id. ib. & Plin. Hiſt. l. xxix. c. 4.
[c] *See Mr.* Mede, l. i. *Diſc.* xli.

and

and happy Part of the Earth, yet the whole Earth before the Fall, was very different from what it has been ſince. For if it had continued as it was, the Curſe and Puniſhment upon Mankind could not have been effected in that manner, in which it was determined.

2. Our Firſt Parents were turned out of Paradiſe, and not ſuffered to taſte of the Tree of Life. They had been charged not to eat of the Fruit in the midſt of the Garden, and threatned with Death, that is, that they ſhould become mortal, and be ſure to die, if they would preſume to eat of it. To be ſubject to Miſery both in Body and Mind, ſo that the Body ſhould decay, and at laſt be diſſolved, and the Soul which could not periſh, ſhould be miſerable after its ſeparation from the Body, was the original Notion of Death; and our Firſt Parents, who had never ſeen what natural dying was, underſtood Death no otherwiſe than as a privation of Happineſs, and conſequently a ſtate of Miſery both in this Life and the next: The firſt was unavoidable, the latter to be avoided by Repentance, and a future Obedience thro' Faith in God's Mercy for Chriſt's ſake. A ſtate of Damnation is a ſtate of Death; and the Soul which lies under the Divine Wrath, is in that ſtate, tho' it be not irreverſible during this Life. So that the Death threatned being twofold, *viz.* of the Soul, and of the Body, it was accordingly inflicted on both: But it was not threatned, that this Death ſhould be to the final deſtruction either of Soul or Body; but thro' the Redemption of Chriſt, the Body might be recovered from the Death, to which it became ſubject, to a Bleſſed and Glorious Reſurrection, and the Soul be reſtored from the Death, into which it had fallen, to a ſtate of Reconciliation and Favour with God.

They were hindred from taſting of that Tree which was to have been the means and inſtrument of Immortality to them. For God, who has given a Medicinal Vertue and a Power of Nouriſhment to other Fruits and Herbs.

Herbs, might convey a Power and Influence into this Tree, of rendring Men immortal by preventing the decays of Nature, and nouriſhing or ſtrengthning them to an endleſs Life. How this ſhould have been, we are now no more able to know than to become immortal here upon Earth: But this was God's Decree, that immortality ſhould be annex'd to the taſting of that Tree, and therefore our Firſt Parents, when they had incurred the Penalty of Death, were not ſuffered to taſte of it, but were forced out of Paradiſe, and it was juſt that they ſhould be hindred from enjoying any longer the Delights of Paradiſe, for the Tranſgreſſion of a Commandment, which Wantonneſs only, and a vain and criminal Curioſity, could make them diſobey.

We are able to give little more account, how the Food we now eat, can nouriſh and ſuſtain us from time to time for threeſcore and ten, or fourſcore Years, than how the Fruit of the Tree of Life ſhould have been a preſervative to keep Men alive for ever; only this we have the Experience of, and ſo fancy we can tell how it comes to paſs; but that is ſtrange to us; and what is ſtrange, Men wonder at, and will hardly believe it. But ſince God has endued our ordinary Food with a power of Nouriſhment, no Man can reaſonably doubt, but that he might endue this Fruit with ſuch a Vertue, that it ſhould have made Men immortal to taſte of it, and have prevented that decay of Nature, which now ſtill creeps upon us in the uſe of other Food. We may well ſuppoſe, that if they had once taſted of this Fruit, they ſhould have ſuffered no Decay, but have lived in conſtant Vigour here, tho' partaking afterwards only of other Nouriſhment, till they had been tranſlated to Heaven. Or it might be deſign'd, not as a Phyſical, but a Sacramental Cauſe of Immortality, that is, as a Sign and Pledge of Immortality; God having decreed, that upon the taſting of this Fruit, *Adam* and his Poſterity ſhould have been

been immortal. But the forbidden Fruit being of a moſt delicious Taſte, as well *as pleaſant to the Eyes*, and containing a very fermenting Juice, might put the Blood and Spirits into great diſorder, and thereby diveſt the Soul of that Power and Dominion which it had before over the Body, and by a cloſer and more intimate Union with Matter, might reduce it to that miſerable condition, which has been propagated and derived down to Poſterity with the humane Nature from our Firſt Parents; as ſome Poyſons now ſtrangely affect the Nerves and Spirits, without cauſing immediate Death, but make ſuch Alterations in the Body, as are never to be cured. And it could not be fitting that Man ſhould become immortal in this Condition, or that the Threatning of God, however, ſhould not take place.

From what has been hitherto ſaid upon this Subject, I hope it is evident, that there can be no neceſſity of running to Allegorical Interpretations to explain the Fall of our Firſt Parents. And indeed, all the reaſon that can be given, why it is repreſented under an Allegory, will rather prove the litteral Senſe. For if the Simplicity, and the Cuſtoms, and manner of Life in the beginning of the World did require, that the Fall of our Firſt Parents ſhould be deſcrib'd under an Allegory of this nature; for the very ſame reaſons we may ſuppoſe, that the Fall was in this manner. For what is it which makes it ſeem improbable, but only its being diſagreeable, as ſome Men conceit, to Reaſon? But if it be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a thing ſhould have been in the beginning of the World, why is it not as abſurd that ſuch a thing ſhould be repreſented to thoſe, who liv'd at the beginning of the World, as if it had been? If this was then the moſt fitting and proper repreſentation of the Fall, why was it not the moſt likely manner for it to happen by? God's Diſpenſations are always fitted to the Capacities and Circumſtances of thoſe, who are moſt concern'd

cern'd in them; and the Devil, in his Temptations, applies himſelf to the Circumſtances of thoſe, whom he would ſeduce: And it cannot be conceiv'd, that the moſt remarkable thing that ever has befallen Mankind, (except the Redemption of the World by Chriſt) ſhould ſo come to paſs, as not to be told to Poſterity, but in an Allegory. For if the literal truth had ever been known, it was impoſſible it ſhould be forgotten in ſo few Generations, and that *Moſes* ſhould put an Allegory in the room of it. Did the Children of *Iſrael* know the Hiſtorical Truth of the Fall, or did they not know it? If they did, why ſhould *Moſes* diſguiſe it under an Allegory, rather than the reſt of the Book of *Geneſis?* If they did not know it, how could it be forgotten in ſo few Generations of Men, ſuppoſing it had ever been known to *Adam*'s Poſterity? If it were never known, but the relation of it were always conveyed down in *Metaphor* and *Allegory*, then this *Allegory* muſt paſs for Hiſtorical Truth in thoſe Ages; and the reaſon why it was delivered to them in *Allegory*, muſt be, becauſe that manner of delivering it, was moſt ſuitable to that Age, and moſt credible, and every way moſt proper; and if it were moſt fitting that it ſhould be thought to have happened ſo, this is a good Argument that it did really happen ſo, ſince there is nothing hinders, but it might ſo have happened, and it was moſt probable at leaſt to the firſt Ages of the World, that it did ſo come to paſs, or elſe it would not have been requiſite to relate it in this manner.

3. The Fall of our Firſt Parents brought a Curſe upon their Poſterity. And here it muſt be acknowledg'd, that God may beſtow his infinite Grace and Mercies upon what terms he pleaſeth, and therefore he might ordain, that the Happineſs or Unhappineſs of their Poſterity ſhould depend upon the Obedience or Diſobedience of our Firſt Parents.

(1.) God

(1.) God might ordain, that the Condition of their Poſterity in this World ſhould depend upon it, ſo that they ſhould have been immortal upon their Obedience, and ſhould become mortal upon their Diſobedience; that they ſhould be made ſubject to Cares and Labours, to Diſeaſes and Dangers, by reaſon of the Fall of our Firſt Parents, from which, otherwiſe they ſhould have been exempt. This is eſteem'd juſt in all Governments amongſt Men, that Children ſhould be reduced to Poverty and Diſgrace by the fault of their Parents, from whom Riches and Honours were to have deſcended upon them: And this way of proceeding is juſt, both in Humane Laws, and in the Diſpenſations of Providence; becauſe God and our Country have an antecedent right and intereſt in us, ſuperior to any Man's private Title or Welfare; and this they may juſtly make uſe of to reſtrain Men from thoſe Crimes, out of love and concern for their Poſterity, from which no conſideration of themſelves could have with-held them. The Experience of the World has found this to be the moſt effectual Remedy with many Men; and therefore, the wiſeſt and juſteſt Governments have made uſe of it; and the moſt wiſe and juſt God might think fit to deal in this manner with our Firſt Parents, by repreſenting to them, that the Happineſs or Miſery of their Poſterity depended upon their good or ill Behaviour in this one Inſtance of their Duty. We daily ſee, that Children commonly inherit the Diſeaſes of their Parents; and an extravagant and vicious Father leaves his Son Heir to nothing but the Name and Shadow perhaps of a Great Family, with an infirm and ſickly Conſtitution, and little or nothing to ſupport and relieve it. Now if theſe Miſeries and Calamities had been entail'd upon all the Race of Mankind from *Adam*, the thing would have been the ſame in the nature and juſtice of it (for Numbers cannot alter the nature of things) as it is now, when they deſcend upon ſome,

only from their immediate Parents. And therefore it muſt be much rather juſt, that the Fall of our Firſt Parents ſhould make their whole Race only *liable* to ſuch Calamities, but not involve All neceſſarily in them.

(2.) The Communications of God's Loving-kindneſs, and the Favours and Bleſſings of his more immediate Preſence, might depend upon the Behaviour of the Firſt Parents of Mankind. He might ſend them out of Paradiſe, and might withdraw his free and uſual Communications of himſelf from them and their Poſterity, upon this Forfeiture, by their Diſobedience. It was his undeſerved, voluntary Bounty and Goodneſs, to vouchſafe them at firſt; and there could be no injuſtice in withdrawing them, after this Offence.

(3.) The proneneſs, which we cannot but obſerve in our ſelves to Sin, might proceed from hence: We daily ſee and feel the corruption of our Nature, by whatſoever means we became ſubject to it. So that it is in vain to object, that it would be unjuſt that all Mankind ſhould be involv'd in *Adam*'s Sin. For the Condition which we are in, is Matter of Fact, of which no Man doth, or can doubt: The Queſtion is only, how we come into this Condition; and ſince we are born in it, and it is our natural and hereditary Evil, the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God is cleared and vindicated, by aſſigning a Cauſe for it; from the imputations of ſuch as muſt acknowledge the ſame corruption of Nature, but will allow no Cauſe or Reaſon for it, except the arbitrary Will and Pleaſure of the Creator; unleſs they aſcribe it to habits of Vice contracted in a ſtate of Pre-exiſtence, which, as I have ſhewn, is a mere Fiction, or Suppoſition, not only without Proof, but againſt all Reaſon. The Children of vicious Parents are generally moſt enclin'd to Vice; and if Men may partake of the evil Diſpoſitions and Inclinations of their more immediate Parents,

why

why might not the corruption of the humane Nature in our Firſt Parents deſcend upon all their Poſterity?

(4.) The Happineſs of Men in the next Life, might depend upon the Obedience of our Firſt Parents. For when God propoſed to beſtow upon Men Rewards of Glory and Happineſs, which far ſurpaſs any pretences of Deſert or Claim of Right, that they in a ſtate of Righteouſneſs and Innocency could have been able to make, ſince the Promiſes were ſo great, and the Happineſs ſo far exceeding any thing to which Men could pretend a Right; we muſt be very unreaſonable, unleſs we will confeſs that God might beſtow his own Gifts upon his own terms. He might therefore debar Men from Heaven upon the tranſgreſſion of our Firſt Parents, becauſe the Promiſe of Heaven was an Act of his free Bounty. For no Man can pretend, that an innocent Creature which preſerves its Integrity, muſt, for that reaſon, be advanced to the unſpeakable Joys of Heaven. No Creature can be *profitable* to his Maker, and an *unprofitable Servant* can merit no ſuch Reward. And what God was not obliged to beſtow, tho' Men had continued in the ſtate of Innocency, he might with all the Juſtice and Reaſon in the World refuſe, when Men became diveſted of their Innocency, and thereby forfeited all pretences to that Happineſs which was promiſed upon condition, that our Firſt Parents had continued in their Primitive and Original ſtate of Righteouſneſs.

(5.) God might ordain, that all Men ſhould become liable to eternal Miſery by the Fall of our Firſt Parents; and that thoſe who would not accept of the Means appointed of Salvation by Faith in Chriſt, to reſcue them from it, ſhould periſh eternally. We no ſooner read of the Fall of Man, but Chriſt is forthwith promiſed, even before the puniſhment was denounced upon *Adam* and *Eve* for their Offence; the Seed of the Woman is immediately promiſed to bruiſe the Serpent's Head, and afterwards the Judgment is

denounced, firſt upon *Eve*, and then upon *Adam*, for their Tranſgreſſion; and the Seed of the Woman's bruiſing the Serpent's Head, is to be underſtood of Victory over our ſpiritual Enemies, and that Conqueſt which ſhould be obtained over Death and Hell by Chriſt. For the temporal Puniſhment which was to befal *Adam* and *Eve*, and their Poſterity, is afterwards added, and therefore this Promiſe cannot be underſtood of a Deliverance from that, but from the Wrath of God, and of Redemption from Sin upon Repentance, under whatever condition of this Life.

The conſequence of the Sin of our Firſt Parents, is to entail Grief, and Trouble, and Labour, and Pain upon their Poſterity, and a frail and infirm Nature, expoſed to Temptations, and deſtitute of the Aids of Grace, and the Preſence of God in their Hearts, uncapable of Heaven, and in no capacity of avoiding Hell without Chriſt's Merits. But *Adam* was *the Figure of him that was to come. Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even ſo, by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life*, Rom. v. 14, 18. Chriſt was, at that very time, promiſed to take away all the Curſe and Vengeance conſequent upon the Tranſgreſſion of our Firſt Parents, nay, his Death was pre-ordained and determined before-hand. For Chriſt is *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. i. 20. He was ſlain in the determinate Counſel, and Fore-knowledge of God, even before the Fall of our Firſt Parents came to paſs: the whole Scheme and Deſign of Man's Salvation, was laid from all Eternity in God's Counſel and Decree; he foreſaw that Man would fall, and he determined to ſend his Son to redeem him; and this he had determined to do ſo long before the Fall of Man, even by an eternal Decree. So that the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God had effectually provided againſt the ill

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Conſequences, to the Salvation of Mankind by the Fall, in all that obey him; and made it impoſſible that *Adam*'s Poſterity ſhould become eternally miſerable, and tormented in Hell Fire, but through their own Fault. For tho' we learn from the Scriptures, (*Epheſ.* ii. 3.) that Infants are *by nature born in ſin, and the children of wrath*, yet, whatever the Effects of that Wrath may be, we have no Ground to conclude, that any one ſhall be condemn'd to the Flames and Pains of Hell, without his own Perſonal and Actual Guilt. The Redemption of the World by Chriſt was decreed from Eternity, and was actually promis'd before any Child of *Adam* was born, and even before the Sentence was denounced upon our firſt Parents, and a Remedy was from the beginning provided againſt all that Miſery, which was brought upon Mankind by their Tranſgreſſion.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Eternity of Hell Torments.

THere is nothing in Religion which has been thought by many, more liable to Objections, than the Eternity of Hell Torments: And yet I ſhall undertake to prove that they are plainly conſiſtent, not only with the Juſtice, but with the Equity and Mercy of God.

I. I ſhall prove the Eternity of Hell Torments to be conſiſtent with the Juſtice of God from theſe Arguments. 1. Becauſe both Rewards and Puniſhments are alike propos'd to our Choice. 2. Becauſe the Rewards are eternal as well as the Puniſhments. 3. Becauſe it was neceſſary that the Sanction of the Divine Laws ſhould be by eternal Rewards and Puniſhments. 4. Becauſe it is neceſſary that eternal Puniſhments

ſhould be inflicted upon the Wicked, according to this Sanction.

1. Both Rewards and Puniſhments are alike propos'd to our Choice. It is certainly conſiſtent with infinite Juſtice, to ſet before Men Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing, and then to deal with them according to their own Choice. And none will fall into a ſtate of everlaſting Miſery, but ſuch as ſhall be convinced in their own Conſciences of the Juſtice of God's Proceedings with them: And this Conviction will prove one great part of their Puniſhment, when they ſhall conſider that they periſh only by their own Fault, that they were wilful and obſtinate to their own Ruin; that no Promiſes, no Threats could reclaim them. And this is all that the ſtricteſt Juſtice can require, to deal with Men according to their own Choice, to let them chooſe their own Condition of Happineſs or Miſery, and to proceed in ſuch a manner with Sinners, as that they ſhall be convinc'd themſelves that there is no Injuſtice done them.

2. The Rewards are eternal as well as the Puniſhments. If the Rewards on the one hand had not born a juſt proportion to the Puniſhments on the other, the Cauſe had been different, and it had ſeem'd hard to ſuffer eternal Torments for a ſhort Life of Sin, if there had not been eternal Happineſs propos'd to as ſhort a Life of Vertue and Righteouſneſs. But ſince the Rewards and the Puniſhments are equal, it is not neceſſary that there ſhould be an exact proportion between the Offence and the Puniſhment conſider'd in it ſelf, and without reſpect had to the Rewards; becauſe the Reward being eternal, anſwers the oppoſite Puniſhment on the other Part. Thus men are wont to ſet ſo much Loſs againſt ſo much Gain; and no Man pities him that might have gain'd as much as he has loſt, if it had not been his own Fault, tho' the Loſs be never ſo great, aud depended upon never ſo ſmall and ſhort a Trial.

It may ſeem an hard caſe, that a Man ſhould loſe his Life for but going out of a City, when he could do no hurt by it, nor intended to do any: and this was the Caſe of *Shimei*; but he had forfeited his Life before to *David*, who had ſpar'd him, and he had been afterwards engag'd, it ſeems, in other ill Practices, and had probably been concern'd with *Joab* and others in ſetting up *Adonijah*; for *David* gives *Solomon* the ſame Direction concerning *Joab* and *Shimei*, 1 *Kings* ii. 5, 8. And it was another *Shimei*, the Son of *Elah*, of whom it is ſaid, that he was not with *Adonijah*, 1 Kings i. 8. iv. 18. *Solomon* therefore ſets him this Condition, and he was to expect to live upon no other Terms, but his keeping within theſe Bounds, which by the Confeſſion of *Shimei* himſelf, was a *good ſaying*, 1 Kings ii. 38. that is, he was glad of it, and could expect no kinder uſage. How indeed could he make any Exception againſt it, when by the Levitical Law, if a Man was ſlain by Accident, the Slayer was confin'd to one of the Cities of Refuge till the Death of the High-Prieſt, and then was to be at liberty; but if he were found without the Borders of the City of his Refuge before, the Revenger of Blood might kill him, *Num.* xxxv. 25. And if *Solomon* had propoſed ſome great Reward to *Shimei*, upon condition that he had kept within the City, he had been not only juſt, but very gracious and bountiful to him in it. I am confident any condemn'd Malefactor would think ſo. The Caſe of Mankind is like this, but infinitely more gracious on God's part, and more provoking on ours. The very beſt of us were born in Sin, and have often forfeited our Salvation to the Divine Juſtice; and God by his Sovereign Power and Authority over us might have propoſed any Terms of Reconciliation: But he has been pleas'd to appoint, that our everlaſting ſtate of Happineſs or Miſery ſhould depend upon the moral Terms of Vertue and Vice, and to ſet everlaſting Happineſs againſt everlaſting Miſery; and no Man ſhall be ſentenced to

Hell Torments, but he might have been as happy as he ſhall find himſelf to be miſerable.

Both the [a] *Jews* and [b] *Heathens* had a Notion of eternal Rewards and Puniſhments, as well as Chriſtians; and the Eternity of the latter was the great Impediment, which *Epicurus* endeavour'd to remove out of the way, to the free Enjoyment of Men's Luſts. For whatever ſome have ſaid in behalf of *Epicurus*, his own Words produced by [c] *Tully* and *Athenæus*, too plain to be evaded, ſhew, that he did place all Happineſs in ſenſual Pleaſures, only he was willing to enjoy them as quietly and ſecurely as he could, and for this Reaſon laid down divers Rules by way of expedient to keep the Mind in Peace, void of all Anxiety in this Life, and of all Hopes or Fears of a future ſtate: The prevailing Belief of the eternal Puniſhments of wicked Men after Death was enough to ruin all his Philoſophy; and therefore this was by all means to be removed, which yet he was never able to effect. So that this was a thing ſufficiently known to make all Men ſenſible of what they muſt expect would be the Conſequence of Sin. And what God has threatned ſo long before, and has given Men Time, and Opportunity, and Ability to avoid, they cannot fall under, but thro' their own Wilfulneſs and Misbehaviour, and can have no reaſon to complain, when it comes upon them.

3. It was neceſſary that the Sanction of the Divine Laws ſhould be by eternal Rewards and Puniſhments. The Sanction of all Laws is by Rewards and Puniſhments, and the Deſign of appointing Puniſhments is to affright Men from Sin, as the end of Rewards is to invite them to Obedience. The only true Meaſure

[a] Iſai. xxxiii. 14. lxvi. 24. Dan. xii. 2.

[b] Plat. in Phæd. Lucret. l. i. verſ. 112. Diog. Laert. in Pythag. Celſ. apud Orig. l. viii. Lerii Hiſt. Navigat. in Braſil. c. 16. Abr. Roger de la Vie & les Mœurs des Bramines, c. xxi. Smith of Virginia, p. 10.

[c] Cic. Tuſc. Qu. l. iii. Athen. Deipnoſ. l. xii. c. 12.

and

and juſt Proportion therefore between the Crime and the Puniſhment, is the Suitableneſs of the Puniſhment to enforce Obedience to the Law, and cauſe it to be duly obſerv'd. For if the Law be good and neceſſary, and cannot be ſo well and ſo effectually obey'd without a very ſevere Puniſhment to enforce it; the Severity of the Puniſhment is ſo far from Cruelty, that it is a juſt and wiſe Proviſion to ſecure Obedience to the Law, and procure all the Good deſign'd by it. Thus we always judge in Humane Laws: A Man is condemn'd to loſe his Life for taking from another that which he perhaps could very well ſpare; but we are all agreed in the Juſtice of making ſuch Examples, becauſe we find that Men can ſcarce be ſecure in their Lives and Eſtates, notwithſtanding the Severity of ſuch Laws. And if the Terrors of everlaſting Torments will not frighten Men from Sin, what effect would a leſs Puniſhment denounced have had upon them? If Men can but once perſuade themſelves that the Torments of Hell are not ſo terrible, they freely give themſelves up to all Licentiouſneſs; and we know how fond Men of wicked Lives are of ſuch Doctrines. God therefore perfectly underſtanding the Temper and Inclination, the Stubbornneſs and Perverſeneſs of Mens Hearts, ſo prone to Vice, and ſo backward to all that is good; foreſaw that a leſs Puniſhment threatned would not prevail with Men to forſake their Sins, and get to Heaven.

And with what Face can that Man object that the Torments of Hell are too great and intolerable, who, as terrible as they are, lives ſtill ſecure and undiſturb'd in his Sins? If they are ſo great that he complains of them, as unjuſt, Why doth he not leave his Sins? If he doth not forſake his Sins, they are not too great, ſince they have not attain'd that End upon him, for which the Puniſhment is denounced, *viz.* his Repentance and Amendment of Life. But if he doth not believe their Eternity, and therefore continues in his

his Sins, this ſhews, how neceſſary the Denouncing, and how neceſſary the Belief of eternal Puniſhments is. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked ſervant: Thou kneweſt that I was an auſtere man,* wherefore then didſt thou not do as thou waſt commanded?

4. It is neceſſary that eternal Puniſhments ſhould be inflicted upon the Wicked according to the Sanction of the Divine Laws by eternal Rewards and Puniſhments. We find by ſad Experience, how little effect the Puniſhments now threatned have upon too many Men, and if they were leſs dreadful they would be ſo much the leſs regarded. So that it appears, that the Appointment of eternal Puniſhments was but neceſſary to keep Men from Sin, and what God's Wiſdom ſaw neceſſary to appoint, his Juſtice and Truth will make it neceſſary for him to inflict: For what he has ſo often and ſo ſolemnly declared, he can never depart from, but will certainly execute it.

The Promiſes and Threatnings relating to Men in this Life are conditional, and are expreſly declar'd to be ſo, *Jer.* xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 13. becauſe in this Life Men are changeable from Good to Bad, or from Bad to Good; but the Threatnings as well as the Promiſes concerning Men in the other Life muſt be abſolute and unconditional, becauſe they relate to an unchangeable final ſtate, which will admit of no Alteration either in the Wicked or in the Righteous. It is not therefore becauſe God can recede from his Threatnings rather than from his Promiſes, that *Nineveh* was ſpar'd; but becauſe all Threatnings during the ſtate of this Life imply a condition of Repentance, upon which they are not to be inflicted, as *Jonah* and the *Ninevites* themſelves well underſtood: but then all Promiſes too, which concern Men in this Life are under the like condition, and are not to be perform'd upon the Diſobedience of thoſe, to whom they are made, as we are aſſured by God's expreſs Declaration,

on. But what is threatned or promis'd to Men to befal them after this Life, is promis'd or threatned to befal them, when they ſhall be in a fixt unalterable ſtate, and therefore muſt be uncapable of any Condition or Reſerve to be imply'd in it. For when Men continue the ſame they were at the time when God's Promiſes and Threatnings were declared to them, his Promiſes and Threatnings always take place in this World according to the full Extent and Importance of the Words in which they were deliver'd; and therefore they muſt thus take place in the next World, into which when Men are once entred, they muſt for ever continue equally fit Objects either of the Divine Promiſes or Threatnings, as they were at the time of their Death. The Point is, that God never changes, but Men are changeable in this Life; and both his Promiſes and Threatnings, which concern Men here, ſuppoſe them ſuch, and therefore *Rewards* are withheld, or Puniſhments remitted in this World, as Men fall into Wickedneſs, or become reclaim'd from it. But in the other World, where the ſtate of Men is unalterable from good or bad, vertuous or vicious, both the Promiſes and Threatnings of God muſt be punctually fulfill'd, and can admit of no condition or reſervation.

God has ſworn, that thoſe who will not believe and obey him, ſhall *not enter into his reſt*, Heb. iii. 18. and what he has once ſworn is irrevocable, *Heb.* vi. 17. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf*, 2 Tim. ii. 13. And it is not only *threatned* that the Wicked ſhall ſuffer eternal Puniſhment, but it is likewiſe expreſly *foretold*, that the Wicked ſhall be ſentenced to *everlaſting fire* at the Day of Judgment, and that they *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*, *Matt.* xxv. 41, 46. To leave no room for hopes of any End or Abatement of the Puniſhment, we have our Saviour's expreſs Declaration, that the Sentence ſhall be paſt according to the Threatning, and that the everlaſting Puniſhment which is threatned, ſhall be

be certainly executed upon the wicked. Our Judge has beforehand declared what Sentence he will paſs, and that it ſhall be accordingly executed; the Terms whereof are therefore as unalterable, as if it were already pronounc'd. He has declared, that the Puniſhments of the wicked, as well as the Rewards of the righteous ſhall be eternal, as directly and poſitively, as he has ſaid any thing elſe relating to the laſt Judgment, or concerning any other part of his Goſpel, and we have as little Reaſon to imagine that his expreſs and repeated Affirmation is capable of a reſerv'd Meaning in this particular, as in any other matter whatſoever.

Some of the Benefits and Advantages which are conſequent to the Puniſhments of this World are precedent to thoſe of the next: Here Men are puniſh'd for their own Amendment, or for the Advantage and Security of others, or for both: In the next World the actual inflicting of Puniſhments is not for theſe ends, but they were threatned for theſe, and they muſt be inflicted when they have been once threatned and declared by God, who cannot lie. It is for the Repentance of Sinners, and for the Benefit of Good Men in preſerving them in the ways of Vertue, and ſecuring them from the Pride and Malice of the Wicked, that Hell ſhould be threatned; but becauſe it is the final and eternal ſtate of the Wicked, it cannot be for their Amendment after the Execution of its Torments upon them, and Good Men being once out of the Power of Temptations, and placed beyond the Malice of the Wicked, can no longer have any Protection or Advantage from the Puniſhments denounced againſt impenitent Sinners; but whether the Advantages ariſing from Puniſhments be before or after the inflicting of Puniſhments, there is the ſame neceſſity for the appointing, and conſequently for the inflicting them, *viz.* the Good of Mankind in keeping Men from Sin, and leaving thoſe without excuſe who will not be reſtrained

ſtrained from it, and work out their own Salvation. But another end of Puniſhment is, that Satisfaction for the violation of the Laws may be made to the ſupreme Authority which is deſpiſed and affronted by it: And the vindication of God's Honour and Authority, and of his Truth and Holineſs in his hatred and deteſtation of Sin, and his indignation againſt Sinners, is manifeſted by the actual Puniſhments of the Damned; and it would be an Argument of the contrary to all this, if they were threatned and not inflicted.

And the Number of Perſons to be thus puniſhed doth not alter the caſe, but only ſhews that many are concerned in it; and if the caſe be the ſame, the Juſtice muſt be the ſame too, tho' the Perſons be never ſo many upon whom it is executed. That which is juſt towards one, or merciful towards one, is juſt or merciful towards never ſo many thouſands. For Juſtice and Mercy conſiſt in the nature of things, not in the greater or leſſer number of Perſons to whom they are extended. And tho' multitudes of Criminals are apt to move compaſſion in Men; yet this proceeds partly from the ſympathy and frailty of humane Nature, which is mightily ſwayed by Number and Multitude to do either Good or Evil; partly from the nature of humane Affairs: For to deſtroy Multitudes, would depopulate Cities and Countries, and would be an affliction to multitudes of innocent Perſons, their Friends and Relations. But it is not ſo in the preſent caſe; there will be no want of Numbers in Heaven, and the Righteous ſhall be everlaſtingly happy, and ſhall perceive no diminution of their Happineſs by reaſon of the Damnation of ſuch as were never ſo dear to them in this World. And Mercy and Pity is not a Paſſion in God as it is in Men, but a Perfection, it is the higheſt Reaſon and Equity; and therefore, tho' the Miſery of Sinners be never ſo ſevere, and the number of the Miſerable never ſo great; yet when the equity and reaſonableneſs of the caſe doth not re-

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quire it, there is nothing to move God for their relief, becauſe he acts by the ſtanding Rules of Reaſon and Wiſdom, not by any fondneſs and weakneſs of Paſſion.

II. I come now to ſhew, how conſiſtent it is with the Mercy of God to inflict eternal Torments upon Sinners. Strict Juſtice has a ſevere Aſpect, and it may ſeem hard for frail Man to abide the Sentence, that he may in ſtrictneſs of Juſtice deſerve. But from the Juſtice of God, it is natural for us to appeal to his Mercy, and thither he allows us to appeal, but not ſo, as to expect that he ſhould be ſo merciful as not to be juſt, or ſhould forget that he is the ſupreme Governour of the World, whilſt he extends his Mercy to the offending and criminal part of it. Puniſhment is neceſſary to all Government, and God as Governour of the World muſt inflict Puniſhments, and what theſe are to be, it belongs to his ſovereign Wiſdom to appoint.

And eternal Torments were appointed for the puniſhment of Sin, not only out of a very juſt, but even out of a gracious deſign, becauſe nothing leſs than the threatnings of them would keep Men from Sin, and from that Miſery which is the unavoidable conſequence of it, and ſo bring them to Heaven. It is an ancient and true Obſervation which [d] St. *Chryſoſtom* has made, that there is Mercy even in the Threats of eternal Vengeance, becauſe nothing leſs could have brought many Men to Heaven. For there is no doubt to be made, but many will be there, who ſhall have cauſe to thank God for this, as the thing which firſt opened their Eyes, and moved them to Repentance, and thereby brought them to Bliſs and Glory. And the ſame Mercy was extended to thoſe that periſh, and would not make the ſame uſe of it, which if they had done they had never periſhed: Tho' Heaven and Hell, ſays

[d] Chryſ. ad Stagir. lib. 1. Tom. 6. Sav. Edit.

[e] St. *Chry-*

[a] St. *Chryſoſtom*, be contrary to each other, yet they both aim at the ſame end, the Salvation of Mankind; the Joys of Heaven invite Men to it, and the Fear of Hell forces thoſe to Heaven, who otherwiſe would be regardleſs of their own Happineſs.

God has uſed the moſt proper and prevailing means to convince Sinners of their danger, and to perſuade them to eſcape it, and obtain Salvation. We have everlaſting Rewards, and everlaſting Puniſhments, propoſed to our choice; we are exhorted with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and mov'd and aſſiſted with the continual influences and aids of Grace, to avoid the puniſhments, and are as earneſtly invited, and as ſufficiently enabled to obtain the Rewards. God *hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way, and live*, as he ſolemnly and with an Oath declares by his Prophet, *Ezekiel* xxxiii. 11. It is his principal intention and deſire, that all Men ſhould be ſaved: He has proclaimed himſelf to be *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin*; but then it is added, that he *will by no means clear the guilty*, that is, the obſtinate and impenitent Sinner, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6, 7. He exhorts, he invites, he promiſes, he threatens; he promiſes eternal Happineſs, and threatens eternal Miſery, to give all the diſcouragement to Vice, and all the enducement to Religion and Vertue, which is poſſible. Laſt of all, he has ſent his Son to inſtruct us in our Duty, and to confirm all this to us, and to purchaſe our Redemption with his own Blood. When the Son of God himſelf ſuffered Death, it was to redeem Men from no leſs than eternal Death and Damnation.

God deals with Men in the plaineſt and moſt condeſcending manner; he lays their Duty before them,

[a] Chryſ. ad Pop. Antioch. de Statuis. Hom. 7.

with

with the Rewards and Puniſhments annex'd, and both eternal, the better to ſecure them in their obedience, and force them to be happy: and then he takes Men at no advantage, but makes all reaſonable allowances, in conſideration of the frailty of humane Nature, and in condeſcenſion to their Infirmities; he exacts not abſolute Perfection, nor any impoſſible Obedience, but requires, that, tho' we cannot live without Sin, yet we ſhould not ſin wilfully and obſtinately; that we ſhould not allow and indulge our ſelves in Sin, and ſhould repent if we have done ſo; he requires a faithful and ſincere diligence in all the Parts of our Duty, which is no more than what every Father and Maſter expects from his Children and Servants. When Men have ſinned, God admits of their Repentance; and if, after Repentance, they ſin again, yet ſtill they ſhall be accepted upon a renew'd Repentance: nay, after a long courſe of Sin, a ſincere Repentance may reconcile them to God; and no Repentance can be too late, that is ſincere. It is extreamly dangerous indeed, to defer our Repentance for one moment, becauſe our Lives are ſo uncertain, and we may provoke God to that degree, that he will no longer afford us an opportunity to repent, nor beſtow that Grace upon us, which is neceſſary to Repentance. But this is after repeated Provocations, and an obſtinate rejecting of the Goodneſs of God, which leads Men to Repentance: And theſe are the Terms of the Goſpel, that *when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul alive.* There is great *Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth*, and the returning Prodigal is received with the greateſt Favour and Tenderneſs. If we will be obedient, we have the aſſiſtance of God's Grace; and if we have done amiſs, yet his Grace is offered us to bring us to Repentance; and we may be pardoned, upon ſincere Reſolutions of Obedience for the future. But if Men either diſbe-

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lieve or diſregard all theſe things, if they neither care for God's Promiſes, nor fear his Threatnings; if they trample under-foot the Blood of his Son, and grieve his bleſſed Spirit; if all the Methods of his Mercy and Goodneſs be loſt upon them, there remains no other Remedy, but Juſtice muſt have its courſe. If when they are told ſo long before-hand, what danger they are in, Men will continue obſtinate in their Diſobedience, after ſo many invitations and encouragements to Repentance, and after ſo great importunity and forbearance; they can have no reaſon to complain of the ſeverity of that Sentence, which they have been ſo often threatned with, and have as often deſpiſed.

Since the Rewards are eternal on the one hand, and the Puniſhments on the other, the Rewards being proportionable to the Puniſhments, the Terms are on both ſides equal; and ſince it is in our power, by the help of the Divine Grace, to avoid the Puniſhments, and obtain the Rewards, the condition is ſuch, as that any wiſe Man would be thankful for it, and would be glad that ſuch a Prize is put into his hands; ſo far would he be from complaining, that the terrors of Puniſhments are join'd to the encouragement of Rewards; that all Motives concur to make him happy, and that God has uſed all means both inward by his Grace, and outward by his Promiſes and Threatnings, to bring us to Salvation.

I repeat it again, for God himſelf often repeats it in the Holy Scriptures; God *hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked*, but hath uſed all means to prevent it; he hath provided Heaven for us, and threatned Hell, if we will not be perſuaded to go to Heaven. If Men will neglect the Means of their Salvation, and will not repent and turn to him, notwithſtanding all his moſt loving and compaſſionate Exhortations, and the Death of his own Son for them; if neither Heaven can invite, nor Hell frighten them from their

Sins, they must thank themselves only for that Destruction, which they bring upon themselves. The Appeal which God so long ago made to the *House of Israel*, may at the last Day be alledg'd to Sinners. Ye have said, that *the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now*, O ye Sinners, *Is not my way equal?* have not *your ways* been *unequal?* And the ways of God shall then appear so equal, and the ways of wicked Men so unreasonable and perverse, that their own Consciences shall bear witness against them; and he that died to save them, will pronounce the Sentence of eternal Damnation upon them.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Jewish *Law.*

THere is nothing which vulgar Minds are more surprised and offended at, nor at which Men of Understanding and Experience are less enclin'd to wonder or take offence, than the several Laws and Customs of divers Nations in the different Ages and Climates of the World: The Habit, the Language, the Letters, and manner of Writing; the Food, the Complexion, the Features of the Body, and Disposition of the Mind, are various in different Countries and Ages. And therefore it is no wonder that the Political and Ceremonial Part of the *Jewish* Law, which was given so many Ages ago, and in a Country, which is at this Day very different in its Customs from ours, should be as different from the Customs in use amongst us, as the Age and Climate. For when God doth appoint Laws for Men, he must be supposed to appoint such as are suitable to the necessities and occasions of those for whom they are made. And some who have travelled into the Eastern Countries, which are not so variable

variable in their fashions and way of Living, as the Western Nations are, have found great advantages both from the nature of the Inhabitants, and of the Climates, and from the Customs and Manners of those Parts of the World, for the explication of divers places of Scripture, which depend upon the knowledge of those Countries.

Now the whole *Jewish* Law may be divided into the *Moral*, the *Political* or *Judicial*, and the *Ceremonial* Law. The Moral Part of *Moses*'s Law, which is contain'd in the Ten Commandments, and enjoins our Duty towards God and towards our Neighbour, is just and holy beyond all Controversie or Exception. And the Political or Judicial Part, with the Ceremonial, was adapted to the Circumstances and Necessities of those Ages, and that Nation. And if the Moral Part be absolutely most divine and holy, and the positive Institutions, both Political and Ritual, were the most fit and proper for that Time and Government; that is, if they were the best that could be, for those Ages and that People; then the whole Body of the *Mosaick* Law is without all just Exception. And that this is so, it will be evident, if we observe the Reasons upon which the positive Laws amongst the *Jews* were instituted.

I. The Judicial Laws, relating to the Administration of Justice in the *Jewish* Government, are so reasonable, that they have been transcrib'd into the Laws of the wisest Heathen Nations, as hath been particularly shewn by Learned Men. There are but few of the Judicial Laws which have been objected against, and these have been often and effectually vindicated. The Law which seems most harsh and rigorous, is that of Retaliation; which yet was the most ancient way of punishment in most Nations, and was not unjust for the Laws to inflict, tho' it was sinful in the Persons injured to require it out of a desire of Revenge, and with a delight to gratifie themselves in their Ene-

mies Sufferings. For if it be juſt to puniſh the taking away of a little Money with Death, how can it be unjuſt to inflict the ſame puniſhment for the depriving a Man of his Eye? And if it be not unjuſt to make Death the puniſhment of ſtriking out an Eye (and what Nation doth not puniſh much leſs Injuries with Death?) how can it be unjuſt to puniſh the Offender with the loſs of his own Eye? One of the ſevereſt Laws that ever was known amongſt a civilized People, was that of the Twelve Tables, which gave leave to [a] the Creditors among the *Romans*, to divide the Debtor's Body between them, if he were inſolvent: This was one of thoſe things which are not commendable in their own Nature, but yet are allow'd and permitted, as *Quintilian* has obſerv'd upon particular Reaſons: but this Law was laid aſide by a general diſuſe, and [b] that of Retaliation among the *Jews* was interpreted by them, according to an ancient Tradition, to be meant not of ſtrict Retaliation, but of a Compenſation to be made in Money to the Perſon maimed.

II. Many of thoſe Rites which may ſeem ſtrange to us, were ſo far from being eſteem'd abſurd, that they became common in thoſe Countries, as Circumciſion was anciently, and is to this day practiſed in many Parts of the World; the [c] *Ægyptians*, and many other Nations, abſtain'd from Swine's Fleſh, and the *Æthiopians* from moſt of the Meats which were forbidden the *Jews*; ſuch Abſtinencies being neceſſary for Health in thoſe Countries. Frequent Waſhings likewiſe are requiſite in hot Countries for Health and Refreſhment; Religion preſcrib'd only the time, and

[a] Sunt enim quædam non laudabilia Natura, ſed jure conceſſa: ut in xii Tabulis Debitoris Corpus inter Creditores dividi licuit; quam legem mos publicus repudiavit. Quintil. Inſtitut. lib. iii. cap. 6.

[b] Maimon. in Seder Zeraim. Præf. p. 5.

[c] Herodot. l. 2. c. 47. l. 4. c. 63, 186. Plut. Sympoſ. l. 4. Q. 5. Plin. l. 8. c. 52. Grot. ad Lev. xi. & Act. x. 15.

manner, and particular occaſion of it; the thing it ſelf is natural. And when we ſee ſuch a Body of Laws of ſo great Antiquity, well contriv'd, and wiſely inſtituted for the ſubſtance of them; if there be in ſome of them any thing peculiar and ſingular; tho' they were but the Laws of a Man, yet common Modeſty and Candor might make us conclude, that ſo wiſe a Lawgiver muſt have ſome good reaſon for thoſe particular Laws, which at this diſtance of time and place cannot be ſo obvious to us; but it would be raſhneſs to ſuſpect, that he had no ſufficient reaſon for thoſe, who appears to have enacted the reſt with ſo great Wiſdom. Thus it would be natural for a Man of tolerable Modeſty to conclude, even concerning a Syſtem of humane Laws, tho' no probable Account could be given of many of them. But when God is the Lawgiver, this ought to ſilence all Diſputes, that they are his Laws, and therefore muſt be wiſe and good for that People, at that time, and in their condition and circumſtances. The Will and Authority of God, without any other reaſon, is ſufficient of it ſelf in any caſe to be alledg'd; and it may be fit, in ſome caſes, that we ſhould have no other reaſon to produce.

It is a raſh and dangerous thing to conclude, that God did not command this or that, becauſe we do not ſee why it ſhould be commanded; this is to ſay, that we will not believe God to be the Author of any thing which we do not like, or would not have to be his. Are we wont to argue thus about humane Laws? Would it be any excuſe for a diſobedient Subject to ſay, that in his opinion, ſuch Laws were not fit to be made, and that therefore he would not believe his Prince had made ſuch Laws; when he had all due notice and full evidence, that he had appointed them, but was reſolved to reject the whole Body of Laws upon the account of ſome which he did not fancy, which yet were obſolete and out of date? Do we not

allow that Reaſons of State and of Government may require many things to be done, and many Laws to be made, which it doth not belong to private Men to be curious about, and which the greateſt part of the Subjects are not able to comprehend? And are not God's Thoughts infinitely above the Thoughts of the wiſeſt Men, and infinitely farther out of our Reach, than the Counſels of the moſt prudent and politick Prince can be above the Underſtanding of his meaneſt and moſt ignorant Subjects? How ſhall we dare then to reject any Divine Revelation, becauſe it is not agreeable in every particular to our Thoughts and Notions of things? But I ſhall enquire however into the Reaſons and Grounds, which appear to us at this diſtance of Time for the Ceremonial Laws, and I doubt not but theſe will be ſufficient to juſtify them to all impartial Men.

1. The Ceremonial Laws were given the *Jews* to prevent them from falling into Idolatry. For they were deſign'd to diſtinguiſh the *Jews* in many things from the Neighbouring Nations, and to hinder them from following their Idolatrous Cuſtoms. And the Cuſtoms of the [d] People of *Iſrael*, and of the Nations round about them, and the ſeveral ſorts of Idolatry practis'd amongſt the *Ægyptians* and *Canaanites* muſt needs render the particular occaſions and grounds of thoſe Laws, which were made to reſtrain them from Idolatry, difficult to be underſtood by all who are unacquainted with the Rites and Idolatrous Worſhip of thoſe Nations. But of thoſe Laws it is enough for ordinary Readers to know, that they had reſpect to the Idolatries then practis'd amongſt the bordering

[d] Summa vero rei hæc eſt: quemadmodum in præcedentibus tibi dixi, dogmata & ritus Zabiorum hodie nobis eſſe incognitos; ita quoque latent nos Hiſtoriæ & annales temporum illorum. Quod ſi autem illa, omniaque particularia, quæ in illis temporibus acciderunt, nobis eſſent cognita, multarum quoque in lege divinâ rerum particularium rationes ſcire poſſemus. Maim. More Nevoch. P^t iii. c. 50.

Nations,

Nations, and this the Scripture often tells us, *Lev.* xviii. 3. xx. 23, 24, 25. *Deut.* xii. 30, 31, xiv. 1, 2. xviii. 9. [e] *Origen* has obſerv'd, that thoſe Beaſts were by the Law of *Moſes* declared to be unclean, by which the *Ægyptians* and other Heathen Nations were wont to make their Divinations, and that moſt beſides were allow'd of as clean. And other Particulars have been made out by Learned Men from the beſt Remains of Antiquity.

And as the *Jews* were taught to look upon the Idolatrous Nations as polluted, and had Laws given them purpoſely to hinder them from too dangerous a Freedom and Familiarity with Idolaters; ſo theſe Laws might be eaſily practis'd when they liv'd within themſelves, ſeparated from other People, but are now become unpracticable ſince they are diſpers'd amongſt all Nations, and the Laws which were adapted to the State and Circumſtances of the *Jewiſh* Nation and Government, muſt be out of Date, ſince the Diſſolution of their Government, and the Diſperſion of the whole People into other Countries. Theſe Laws may well ſeem ſtrange now to us, when they pretend to practiſe them, but this ought to be attributed not to the Laws themſelves, but to their Adherence to them when the Obligation to obſerve them is ſo long ſince expired, and when the People of the *Jews* are in a condition in which many of their Laws cannot, and others were never deſign'd to be obſerv'd. Some [f] of their *Rabbins* have held that things forbidden by the Law might be eaten by them out of the Land of *Judæa*; and the Reaſon why *Daniel* refuſed to eat of the *King's Meat*, and drink of his *Wine*, was, becauſe it was the Cuſtom of [g] Ancient Times, and particularly in thoſe Countries, to conſecrate all which they did either eat or drink to their Gods, by putting part of it on the

[e] Orig. contra Celſ. l. iv. [f] Grot. ad Act. x. 15.
[g] Grot. ad Dan. i. 8. Caſaub. ad Athen. l. i. c. 11.

Altar, or caſting it into the Fire; ſo that to eat of ſuch Meats, or to drink of ſuch Wine had been to partake of things offer'd to Idols. Whereas, by the Law of *Moſes*, nothing was to be eaten or drunken by the Children of *Iſrael*, but what had been *offer'd to the Lord*, either immediately in itſelf, or virtually in the Firſt-fruits and Offerings, *Levit.* xvii. 3. xxiii. 14. *Deut.* xii. 21, 26. But the [h] modern Jews give this Reaſon, why they may drink Wine made by thoſe of other Nations, becauſe they now do not live among Idolaters, and therefore according to the Doctrine of their Rabbins, they are no longer obliged by thoſe Prohibitions, which were deſign'd only to reſtrain them from Idolatry. And in the *Babyloniſh* Captivity they were not under ſo great Difficulties in the Obſervation of the Laws concerning Clean and Unclean Meats, as they have lain under ſince their total and final Diſperſion, for the Favour which God gave them with the Heathens amongſt whom they liv'd, and the Multitudes which were carry'd away and liv'd together, afforded them the Conveniency of following their own Rites and Cuſtoms in eating ſuch Meats only as were not forbidden or defiled: And then they were reſtrain'd from Idolatry by theſe Abſtinencies and they became the more remarkable in the Eyes of the Heathens, and their wonderful Zeal for their Religion even in the ſmalleſt matters, was apt to make thoſe among whom they were Captives, the more earneſt to enquire into the greater and more ſubſtantial and excellent Things of their Law. And theſe were Reaſons which were worth their ſubmitting to great Inconveniencies, by adhering to their Legal Obſervances in other Countries. But now theſe and all other Reaſons are ceas'd, and the Caſe is alter'd, ſince they are a deſpiſed People, diſpers'd in ſmall Parties over the face of the whole Earth; and therefore the

[h] Leo Moden. Pt ii. c. 8. §. 1.

Abſti-

Abſtinencies of the *Jews* are apt to be look'd upon as abſurd by thoſe with whom they converſe, that will not be at the pains to conſider the Grounds upon which they were at firſt inſtituted, and that they are no longer practicable, nor deſign'd to be practis'd, by their Original Inſtitution.

2. Circumciſion, Purifications, Abſtinencies, Sacrifices, and other Rites enjoin'd by the Law of *Moſes*, were not required for their own ſake, or for any real Vertue and Efficacy ſuppoſed to be in the things themſelves, to recommend Men to God's Favour, but were inſtituted to ſignify the inward Purity and Integrity of the Heart, and by outward Obſervances and ſenſible Things, to lead a carnal and ſenſual People to the Knowledge and Practice of things Spiritual. The Children of *Iſrael* are ſometimes ſaid to be *ſanctified*, that is, to be ſeparated and ſet apart for God's Honour and Service by theſe Rites and Ceremonies, both becauſe they were hereby diſtinguiſh'd from other Nations, and becauſe this Ritual Worſhip was appointed as a means to lead them to internal Sanctity and Holineſs of Mind, and to procure in them an Awe and Reverence of that Majeſty, by whoſe Commandment it was to be obſerv'd.

Circumciſion was appointed as a Fœderal Rite, and as a Token and Pledge of the Covenant between God and *Abraham*, and his Seed after him, of which the *Meſſias* was to be born. And as it was a Sacrament of the Covenant between God and the People of *Iſrael*, ſo it had reſpect to the Nations whom they were to root out; theſe Nations were notorious for the Sins of the Fleſh, *Lev.* xviii. 24. and there is a peculiar Significancy in the Rite of Circumciſion of the Reſtraint and Exciſion of Carnal Luſts. It was declar'd by *Moſes* himſelf to ſignify the Circumciſion of the Heart, *Lev.* xxvi. 41. *Deut.* x. 16. xxx. 6. and likewiſe by the Prophets, *Jer.* iv. 4. vi. 10. *Ezek.* xliv. 7. They expound Circumciſion in a Myſtical and Spiri-

tual

tual Senſe; and according to this Notion of Circumciſion, St. *Paul* maintains that the true Circumciſion is among the Chriſtians, whereof the *Jewiſh* Circumciſion of the Fleſh was but a Figure, *Rom.* ii. 28. *Phil.* iii. 3.

The Pardon of Sin upon Repentance is expreſs'd in Scripture by cleanſing and purifying, *Pſal.* xix. 12. li. 2. *Iſai.* i. 16. *Jer.* iv. 14. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, 26. by which is denoted to us, that the outward cleanſing of the Fleſh was deſign'd to put Men in mind of the inward Purification and Cleanſing from Sin and from Unrighteouſneſs, becauſe this defiles the Soul, and makes it loathſom in God's Sight, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. *Jam.* iv. 8. Unleavened Bread was an Emblem of *Sincerity and Truth*, 1 Cor. v. 8.

Abſtinency from things in a Legal Account, *Common and Unclean* was appointed to reſtrain Men by Symbolical Inſtructions from Sin, which pollutes the Mind, and the Moral [i] Signification of ſuch Prohibitions is imply'd in the Proverb alledg'd by St. *Peter* concerning Dogs and Swine, which are two of the Animals prohibited the *Jews*, 2 Pet. ii. 22.

Sacrifices and Offerings were to repreſent to them, that they depended upon God for all they had, and therefore they were to offer ſomething of every kind in acknowledgment that they had receiv'd all which they enjoy'd from him. They were likewiſe deſign'd to ſignify to them that their Sins deſerv'd Death, even *Everlaſting Burnings*. The daily Sacrifices were to be Remembrances to them of that acceptable and living Sacrifice, which they were to offer to God, *a broken and a contrite heart*, and an innocent and blameleſs Life, *Pſal.* iv. 4, 5. cxli. 2. And the Scriptures frequently teſtify how little Pleaſure God took in the Sa-

[i] Quid ergo eſt? In Animalibus mores depinguntur humani, & Actus & Voluntates. —— in Animalibus per legem quaſi quoddam humanæ vitæ ſpeculum conſtitutum eſt. Novatian. de Cib. Judaic. cap. 3.

crifices

crifices of Beaſts, and in Burnt-Offerings, Incenſe, and Oblations, and how ſmall regard he had to them: He never required theſe things for themſelves and upon their own account, or becauſe there is any thing acceptable to him in them, *Pſal.* xl. 6. l. 8. li. 17. To do Juſtice and love Mercy is more acceptable to God than all Sacrifices, *Prov.* xxi. 3. *Jer.* vii. 22, 23. This is ſo evident throughout the whole Old Teſtament, that the Scribes and Phariſees in the moſt ſuperſtitious and corrupt Age of the *Jewiſh* Church, could not but confeſs that the Love of God and of our Neighbour is of more account in God's Sight than all the Sacrifices and Oblations in the World, *Mark* xii. 37. The Ceremonial Part of the Law was always to give place to the Moral: Thus Acts of Charity were to be done, tho' it happen'd that they were perform'd by the Violation of the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, and the Prophets were, upon neceſſary Cauſes, held exempted from the Legal Obſervances. *For I deſired Mercy and not Sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than Burnt-Offerings*, Hoſ. vi. 6.

3. All the *Jewiſh* Worſhip appointed by the Moſaical Law was Typical of Chriſt and his Goſpel. By a *Type* we are to underſtand the Likeneſs and Reſemblance which one thing has to another, as that of the Impreſſion to the Seal, or of the Shadow to the Subſtance, or of the Picture to the Man whom it repreſents. Thus the Death of Chriſt was typify'd or reſembled, or repreſented and prefigured by the Death of the Beaſts which were ſacrificed; they were Signs appointed to keep up the Remembrance that Chriſt was to be ſacrificed, and were very apt and proper to put Men in mind of it.

It was acknowledg'd by the *Jews*, and receiv'd from the Beginning as a certain Rule for the Interpretation of Scripture, that there was a Typical as well as a Literal Senſe of it, relating to the *Meſſias* and his Kingdom. Circumciſion was to ſignify to them that Chriſt was

was to be born of the Seed of *Abraham*, to whom Circumciſion was firſt enjoin'd, upon the Promiſe made to him of *Iſaac*, from whom Chriſt was to deſcend: And the Blood ſhed in Circumciſion was Typical of that Blood which Chriſt was to ſhed for us.

The moſt probable Account of the Original of Sacrifices, is, that they were at firſt of Divine Inſtitution, and were appointed ſoon after the Fall of Man, as Types of the Sacrifice of the Death of Chriſt, who was promis'd to be ſent to die for the Expiation of Sin. For though there be a Natural Reaſon why we ſhould not *offer unto the Lord our God of that which doth coſt us nothing*, but ſhould *honour the Lord with our ſubſtance*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. *Prov.* iii. 9. and ſhould preſent ſome part of the beſt of what we have, in Devotion and Gratitude to him, from whom we have receiv'd the Whole: Yet no ſufficient Reaſon can be given why Beaſts ſhould be ſlain in Sacrifice, before they were uſed, as far as it appears, for Food by Men, or how it ſhould be imagined that God would accept of the Blood of any Creature, or be pleas'd with the taking from it that Life which he had given it; or why a peculiar Efficacy towards the Expiation of Sin was ſuppoſed to be in the Blood, unleſs it had been upon the Account of the Blood of Chriſt, which was typically prefigur'd by the Blood of Beaſts. By Faith whereof, *Abel* offer'd his Sacrifice, and was accepted, *Heb.* xi. 4. And in this firſt inſtance of Sacrifices and Oblations, they are mention'd, not as then firſt uſed, but as received and accuſtomed Acts of Worſhip, to which *Cain* as well as *Abel* knew himſelf obliged. The Paſchal Lamb was a plain Type of Chriſt, for which Reaſon Chriſt is ſtyled, *the Lamb of God, and our Paſſover, which is ſacrificed for us*, Joh. i. 29. 1 *Cor.* v. 7. And for the ſame Reaſon, the Feaſt of the Paſſover was appointed to the *Iſraelites* juſt before their Eſcape out of *Ægypt* to be a Type to them of that Deliverance which Chriſt was to accompliſh, of which their

their Deliverance out of *Egypt* was but a Figure. *Aaron* was a Type of Chriſt, and all the Sacrifices he offered were Types of Chriſt's Sacrifice upon the Croſs: The legal Sacrifices freed the Offenders from temporal Puniſhments, *Levit.* vi. 7. and thereby typified Chriſt's Sacrifice upon the Croſs, by the Merit whereof we are delivered from eternal Damnation. They were appointed to take away the legal Uncleanneſs, to reſtore Men to a ſtate of legal Purity, which was typical of moral and ſpiritual Purity, and to put the legal Worſhippers into ſuch a condition as the Law required to qualifie them for the *legal Service and Worſhip*; and herein they were Figures of that one Sacrifice, which was to be offered up once for all, in atonement for the Sins of all Mankind, *Heb.* ix. 14. whereby Men might be rendred capable of paying God an acceptable Service *in Spirit and in Truth*, and of offering the Sacrifices of Praiſe and good Works, the *ſpiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, Heb. xiii. 15, 16. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Legal Purifications were typical of that Purification which is by the Blood of Chriſt, *Tit.* ii. 14. 1 *John* i. 9. And the ſmoak of the Incenſe aſcending, ſignified how the Prayers of the Saints come up before God, *Rev.* v. 8. viii. 3, 4. The State and Diſpenſation of the Goſpel is expreſs'd by the Prophet *Malachi* under the Figure of *Incenſe*, and *a pure Offering*, Malach. i. 11.

The whole Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* is written upon this Subject, to ſhew that all the Legal Rites and Ceremonial Worſhip, were but Shadows, and Types, and Figures of Chriſt, and of that Redemption, Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification, which was to be wrought by him, and that therefore they were to ceaſe when in him they had received their Accompliſhment. Their Incenſe and Purifications, their Sacrifices, their Temple, and the Prieſts themſelves, were all but ſo many Types of Chriſt and his Kingdom under the Goſpel.

Chriſt

Chriſt had been promiſed to our firſt Parents immediately after their Fall, and this Promiſe had been renewed to *Abraham*, with an aſſurance that he ſhould deſcend from *Iſaac*, and Circumciſion was inſtituted as a perpetual mark in the Fleſh of that Covenant; and all Sacrifices from the beginning of their Inſtitution, were as ſo many Types and Memorials of the Sacrifice of Chriſt, which was promiſed before any Sacrifice had been offered: And more eſpecially, that of the Paſſover at the deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of *Ægypt*, was a lively Repreſentation of our Redemption by the Death of Chriſt. They had ever this notion of their legal Worſhip: *Abraham*, to whom Circumciſion was appointed, *ſaw the day* of Chriſt; he foreſaw his Deſcent from himſelf, which was thereby prefigured, *and was glad*, John viii. 56. *The Goſpel was preached unto Abraham*, Gal. iii. 8. And *Moſes*, by whom the Ceremonial Service was ordained, had ſo clear a proſpect of the *Meſſias* and his Kingdom, that he *eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Ægypt*, Heb. xi. 26. Thoſe places of Scripture which the Apoſtles apply to Chriſt out of the Old Teſtament, were at that time by the *Jews* themſelves, to whom they cite them, underſtood of the *Meſſias*; they always ſuppoſed, that whatever was great and excellent among them, was but a faint and imperfect reſemblance of that Glory and Excellency which was to be in its full Perfection and Accompliſhment under the *Meſſias*.

4. During this Ceremonial Diſpenſation, there was a ſufficient Revelation of the internal and ſpiritual part of Religion: In the Books of *Moſes*, the Love of God with all the Heart, and the Love of their Neighbour as of themſelves, is expreſly commanded the Children of *Iſrael*, Lev. xix. 18. Deut. vi. 5. The High Prieſt's Office was to bleſs the People, *Numb.* vi. 23. and the Office of the Prieſts and Levites, beſides the Ceremonial Service, was *to ſtand every Morning*

ing to thank and praiſe the Lord, and likewiſe at Even, 1 Chron. xxiii. 30. 2 Chron. xxxi. 2. and [k] no Sacrifice was ever offered without Prayers; for Sacrifices were indeed ſolemn Rites of Supplication and Thankſgiving, 1 *Sam.* vii. 9. *Prov.* xv. 8. 2 *Chron.* xxix. 27. *Ezra* vi. 10. The Temple is ſtyled, *the Houſe, not of Sacrifice, but of Prayer*, Iſa. lvi. 7. for which, principally it was built, 2 *Chron.* vi. 29, *&c.* The immortality of the Soul is implied in that Expreſſion, which is often uſed in the Books of *Moſes*, that Men when they died, were *gathered to their People:* which muſt be underſtood of their Souls; their Bodies being buried at different places, and in divers Countries, not where their Anceſtors had been buried. God ſays to *Abraham, Thou ſhalt go to thy Fathers in Peace*, Gen. xv. 15. which cannot be underſtood of the place of his Burial; and he is ſaid by Death, to *be gathered to his People*, chap. xxv. 8. And *Jacob yielded up the Ghoſt, and was gathered unto his People*, chap. xlix. 33. his Soul was gathered. But a conſiderable time was ſpent in embalming his Body, and in mourning for him, before that was carried into *Canaan to be buried*, chap. l. 3. From theſe Expreſſions, the [l] *Jews* proved the Soul to be immortal. And tho' this, and ſuch like Phraſes, may ſometimes ſignifie no more than their leaving the World, as others had done before them, (as moſt Words and Expreſſions are often uſed improperly) and may in ſome places be applied to ill Men; yet there could never have been any Reaſon or Foundation for ſuch a Phraſe, but from a ſuppoſition of the Soul's Immortality. *Balaam* wiſh'd to *die the Death of the Righteous*, and that his *laſt End* might be *like* that of the Righteous, *Numb.* xxiii. 10. For what reaſon, but that he might not be miſerable, but happy after Death?

[k] Vid. Outr. de Sacrific. lib. 1. c. 15. § 9.
[l] Philo Jud. Quis rerum Divin. Heres.

A future State was always believ'd by the *Jews*, as revealed to them in the Old Teſtament; and whatever Texts there may be, which ſeem to imply the contrary, they are either ſpoken only by way of Objection, as in the Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*; for a future State and Judgment are afterwards expreſly aſſerted, *Eccl.* iii. 21. xi. 9. xii. 7, 14. or elſe they have no relation to the ſtate after this Life, either to affirm, or deny it; but are to be underſtood to proceed from that deſire, which pious Men had to honour and glorifie God in their ſeveral Generations, by reſtoring his Worſhip, where it had been neglected, or in propagating his Religion, where it had not been yet known. Thus that good King *Hezekiah* ſays to God in his Thankſgiving, *The Grave cannot praiſe thee, Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the Pit, cannot hope for thy Truth. The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day: The Father to the Children ſhall make known thy Truth*, Iſa. xxxviii. 18, 19. This is ſpoken with the ſame Zeal and Spirit, by which he was acted in his Reformation. And when *David* ſaid, *In Death, there is no remembrance of thee; in the Grave, who ſhall give thee Thanks?* Pſal. vi. 5. He cannot be ſuppoſed to have any doubtfulneſs concerning a future State; for in other *Pſalms* he plainly aſſerts it, *Pſal.* xvi. 11. xvii. 15. But his meaning is explain'd, *Pſal.* xxx. 9. where he ſays, *What profit is there in my Blood, when I go down into the Pit? Shall the Duſt praiſe thee? Shall it declare thy Truth?* In our other Tranſlation it is, *Shall the Duſt give Thanks to thee?* To give Thanks then to God, is in grateful acknowledgment for his Mercies; to praiſe and magnifie his Name, and manifeſt his Truth among Men, which is not to be done in the Grave. God's Diſpenſations to the People of *Iſrael*, being with this deſign: Pious Men deſir'd that their Lives might be prolong'd for this purpoſe, that they might declare his Truth, and vindicate and promote his Honour

in this World, before they were call'd to the next, where there can be no opportunity for this ſervice to God and benefit to Mankind. *O God, forſake me not, until I have ſhewed thy ſtrength unto this Generation, and thy Power to every one that is to come*, Pſal. lxxi. 18. *I ſhall not die, but live, and declare the Works of the Lord*, Pſal. cxviii. 17. Good Men are ſometimes ſaid no longer *to be*, when they are taken out of this World; *Enoch walked with God, and was not, i. e.* he was no longer in this World; *for God took him*, Gen. v. 24. And when *David* prays, *O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength before I go hence, and be no more*, Pſal. xxxix. it is well explained in our other Tranſlation, *Before I go hence, and be no more ſeen.* In the ſame manner, *Jacob* ſpeaks not only of *Joſeph*, whom he thought to be dead, but of *Simeon*, who was left for a Pledge in *Ægypt*. *Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not*, Gen. xlii. 36. He looked upon both as loſt and dead to him, and made no more account of them, as to any comfort he could expect from them, than if they had had no Being.

Enoch was taken up alive into Heaven, to be an Example of that Happineſs which God has prepar'd for thoſe who *walk with him*, and pleaſe him, *Gen.* v. 24. And the Soul of the Widow's Son, who was reſtored to Life by *Elijah*, is ſaid to *come again into him*, 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22. which implies, that the Soul does not periſh at the time of Death, but only departs out of the Body. And our Saviour, *Mark* xii. 26. proves the Reſurrection of the Dead from *Exod.* iii. 6. Thoſe for whom God has that peculiar Favour, as to ſtile himſelf *their God*, and to declare this to be *his Name* or Title *for ever*, and this to be *his Memorial unto all Generations*, ver. 15. we may be aſſured are not ſo dead, as utterly to have periſh'd: and if their Souls have ſurviv'd their Bodies, their Bodies likewiſe muſt be raiſed again; foraſmuch as the Soul of *Abraham*, without his Body, is not *Abraham*, but only

ly one part of him: and his Soul could not be stil'd *Abraham*, but with respect not only to its past, but to its future Union with his Body: For tho' a part be often put for the whole, yet it always supposes either the present or future Existence of the Whole; but is never put for the Whole, when it remains alone, and the rest is utterly and finally extinct. *Abraham* consists of Soul and Body; and therefore God being the God of *Abraham*, is God both of the Soul and Body of *Abraham*; which is an argument that the Soul of *Abraham* now lives, and that his Body shall live again; *for all live to God.* And he would not have given himself a solemn Title and Denomination from a Man who had no longer any Being; nor from that part of him, which had utterly perish'd. *I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* *Abraham* had his Name in token that he should be a *Father of many Nations*, Gen. xvii. 5. and *Isaac* and *Jacob* were Heirs of the same Promise; and therefore the God of *Abraham* is the God of that Father of Nations, and has a particular regard to the Bodies (from which those Nations were descended) as well as to the Souls of *Abraham* and his Posterity. *I am the God of Abraham*, not *I was*, but *I am*, which supposes *Abraham* yet to be. I am the same God still to him, that I was during his Life upon Earth; he is still the Object of the Divine Care and Goodness, and therefore shall be rewarded both in Body and Soul. *God is not ashamed to be call'd their God: for he hath prepared for them a City*, Heb. xi. 16. that is, an Habitation in Heaven.

The Children of *Israel*, before the giving of the Law, were instructed in the Rewards and Punishments of the Life to come; and temporal Rewards and Punishments were appointed by *Moses*, as Pledges and Types to represent and prefigure to them those of a future state. For that *Abraham*, and the Patriarchs before him, had a true and full notion of a Life after

this, we are certain from *Heb.* xi. 10, 13. And we have as great certainty, that *Abraham* did inſtruct *his Children and his Houſhold after him*, Gen. xviii. 19. and *Moſes wrote* of Chriſt, *Joh.* v. 46. *Gen.* iii. 15. xii. 3. xlix. 10. *Deut.* xviii. 15, 18.

Theſe things were delivered in the Books of *Moſes*, and well underſtood by the generality of the *Jews* in all Ages; the *Sadducees* were ſingular in denying the Reſurrection of the Dead, and ſome other Doctrines, in which all the reſt were agreed. But if there were any obſcurity or difficulty in the Books of *Moſes*, they had beſides the Prieſts, a conſtant ſucceſſion of Prophets for many Ages, to interpret them, and to maintain and inculcate thoſe Fundamental Doctrines of Religion. The Rewards of Heaven are declared, *Pſal.* xvi. 11. xvii. 15. *Prov.* xv. 24. *Eccleſ.* xii. 14. *Dan.* xii. 2, 3. The Torments of Hell are aſſerted, *Pſal.* xvi. 10. *Eccleſ.* xi. 9. xii. 14. *Iſa.* xxxiii. 14. *Dan.* xii. 2. The Reſurrection of the Dead, *Pſal.* xvii. 15. *Iſa.* xxvi. 19. *Ezek.* xxxvii. 1. *Dan.* xii. 2. *Hoſ.* xiii. 14. And in the Book of *Job*, which is of the greateſt Antiquity, *Job* xiv. 12. xix. 26, 27. In that Expreſſion that *David* and others *ſlept with their Fathers*, is implyed not only the Immortality of the Soul, but the Reſurrection of the Body: For it implies, that there was not a total end of them, but as they ſlept, ſo muſt they awake and riſe again, *Pſal.* xvii. 15. And this Expreſſion is taken from the Old Teſtament, and applied to the ſame ſenſe in the New. Of the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, we are taught, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *Pſal.* xxv. 4. xxvii. 11. li. 10, 11, 12. lxxxvi. 11. cxix. 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135. cxliii. 10. *Prov.* i. 23. *Iſa.* xliv. 3. lix. 21. *Jer.* xxxi. 8. xxxii. 40. *Ezek.* xi. 19. xxxvi. 26, 27. Our Saviour ſpeaking of Regeneration, ſays to *Nicodemus*, *Art thou a Maſter in Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?* John iii. 10. and he bids the *Jews ſearch the Scriptures* of the Old Teſtament; *for in them*, ſays he, *ye think ye have*

eternal Life, and they are they which testifie of me, John v. 39. It was in them foretold, that a much clearer Revelation was to be made by the Gospel, *Jer.* xxxi. 31. When our Saviour, by his Resurrection, gave a fuller manifestation of a future immortal state than could be given by any other means, and *brought Life and Immortality to light thro' the Gospel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. Yet this it self was typified in the Old Testament, by raising Dead Men to Life again; and the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah* into Heaven, was for a Testimony and Assurance of a future state both of Body and Soul. Besides all which, from the frequent mention of the Appearance of Angels in the Books of *Moses*, as well as in the rest of the Old Testament, it follows plainly, that there is another World, and a future state. The *Sadducees*, and all of the same Principles with them, have ever been so sensible of this consequence, that they *believe neither Angel, nor Spirit*, Acts xxiii. 8. It could be upon no other Principle, but a persuasion that Souls survive after the Death of their Bodies, that *Saul* desired *Samuel*'s Ghost to be *brought up to him*, 1 Sam. xxviii. 11. And the Laws against *familiar Spirits*, in the Books of *Moses*, suppose that there are Spirits as well as Men in the World, *Levit.* xix. 31. xx. 6. *Deut.* xviii. 11. For what the *Jews* understood by familiar Spirits, we understand from *Saul*'s Practice; and Facts are the best interpreters of Words, whatever some Criticks may pretend.

The Doctrine delivered by *Moses*, and the Prophets, was as effectual a caution and warning to Men, to keep them from *the place* of *Torments*, as a Message from the Dead could have been, *Luke* xvi. 31. The Old Testament, therefore, is not deficient in any necessary Point of Salvation; but the Ceremonial Law was enjoined, as a suitable help and expedient for the retaining those Truths which had been revealed before.

fore. Which was so well known, [m] that *Celsus* puts this as an Objection into the Mouth of the *Jews*, whom he brings in arguing against the Christian Religion, that it taught them nothing but what they knew before, concerning the Resurrection of the Dead, and a future Judgment, and a state of Rewards and Punishments in another World. And it cannot be denied, that the *Apocryphal*, as well as the *Canonical* Books, teach these things: And that the [n] *Rabbins* teach the Resurrection of the Dead, and a future state of Rewards and Punishments, as fundamental Articles of Faith, which are contained in those now cited, and other Texts of the Old Testament.

The Honour and Authority of our Religion amongst Men, depends very much upon a right knowledge and a due consideration of this Subject. And those who profess never so great veneration for the New Testament, but have little esteem for any part of the Old, understand neither the one nor the other as they ought. They refer all along to each other, and must stand or fall together; for the one is but a Draught as it were, or Model of the other; all things being though obscurely, yet sufficiently taught in the Old Testament, which are fully and lively express'd in the New.

The Sum of all is this: The Faith in the *Messias* to come, and the Principles of Religion and Morality had been delivered down from the beginning by *Adam* and *Noah* to their Posterity: And when *Moses*, by God's direction and appointment, gave Laws to the Children of *Israel*, the end and design of these Laws was the preservation of this Faith and Practice amongst them. And this was effected by visible Objects and sensible Remembrances; the *Jewish* Dispensation was ordain'd in condescension to the circumstances and capacities of those Ages and that Nation, in such a

[m] Origen. contra Cels. lib. 2.
[n] Is. Abravanel. de cap. Fidei, c. 1, 15.

manner as was moſt ſuitable to their Condition, and moſt worthy of God; the reſt of the World had wholly given up and abandon'd themſelves to Carnal Ordinances and Superſtitions; and God, who produceth Good out of Evil, made uſe of this Fondneſs and Dotage of Mankind to the Preſervation and Advancement of Truth and Holineſs amongſt Men. The Ceremonial Worſhip was no farther acceptable to God, and no otherwiſe deſign'd by him, than to keep his People from running into Idolatry, to which they had ſo great a Proneneſs, to put them in mind of their own Sinfulneſs and Unworthineſs, to preſerve a Senſe of Moral Duties, and of an inward and ſpiritual Service; and to retain a Remembrance and Expectation of that *Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction*, which had been foretold, and was *in the fulneſs of time* to be offer'd upon the Croſs for the Sins of the World.

Thanks be to God, that we are inſtructed to worſhip him *in Spirit and in Truth*, without ſo many burthenſome Ceremonies; but in thoſe Ages of the World, nothing would have ſeem'd more ſtrange and abſurd, than a Religion without ſome Pomp and Solemnity of Ceremonies: And God appointed for his People thoſe which were innocent, to reſtrain them from all that were wicked and hurtful; He appointed the Sacrifices of Beaſts to be Types of Chriſt's Sacrifice, and to withhold them from Humane Sacrifices, which were practis'd in other Nations, and enjoin'd by other Religions; he commanded them to abſtain from certain Meats, that they might not eat of things offer'd to Idols, and theſe innocent Ceremonies he made uſeful and ſerviceable to the great ends of Faith and Righteouſneſs. Nothing impracticable can be ſuppoſed to be preſcrib'd by God to any People; nothing which is above their Abilities and preſent Attainments; and therefore would be of no uſe and benefit to them. But rather the Divine Goodneſs would condeſcend to their Infirmities, and comply

with

with them in giving them ſuch Laws, as may be agreeable and convenient for them in their preſent ſtate, and may fit them for an higher and more excellent Diſpenſation. Whatſoever we may think of it now, nothing at the time when the Law was given, would have look'd like Religion, that had been without abundance of Rites and Ceremonies. And herein the Wiſdom of God appears, that to ſuch a People, and in ſuch an Age, he gave a Law ſo admirably proper, and well contriv'd to preſerve the Life and Subſtance of Religion under the Veil of Ceremonies, and to prepare them for the coming of his Son, when it was to be of no longer continuance. *The Law was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*, Joh. i. 17. that is, the Grace of the Goſpel, and the Truth and Reality or Subſtance of thoſe things, which were prefigur'd by the Law.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Ceſſation of the Jewiſh *Law.*

OUR Saviour was the *Great Prophet*, who was to come, as *Moſes* had foretold, and who was expected at the time of *His* Coming; and it was likewiſe expected, that that Prophet ſhould work Miracles, as *Moſes* had done, whom he was to be like, and he was to be a Lawgiver, as *Moſes* had been. The *Jews* had a general Expectation that the *Meſſiah* would manifeſt himſelf by Miracles, *Joh.* vii. 31. Miracles had not been for a long time wrought in the *Jewiſh* Church, but it was receiv'd as a known and undoubted Truth, that they were to be revived by Him. The [a] *Rabbins* ſtill teach, that the Gifts of Miracles and Prophecy are to return at the coming of the *Meſſiah*, according

[a] Maimon. More Nevoch. P[t] ii. c. 36.

to God's expreſs Promiſe: And the *Samaritans* themſelves had this Notion of the *Meſſiah*, that he was to give full Inſtructions in all things relating to the Worſhip of God, *Joh.* iv. 25. And the Prophecies concerning the Birth, and Life, and Death of Chriſt, in all things neceſſary to prove him the true *Meſſiah*, were literally fulfill'd in our Saviour, and thoſe things which concern the Nature of his Kingdom, have been explain'd by him and his Apoſtles. So that it being fully prov'd, that Jeſus is the Chriſt by the Accompliſhment in Him of the Ancient Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah*, we ought to reſt ſatisfy'd in his Authority, both for the Ceſſation of the Law of *Moſes*, and for any Explication which He and his Apoſtles have given us of it. The [b] *Jews* acknowledge, that the Prophets had Authority to diſpenſe with the Law in all things, but Idolatry; notwithſtanding the Prohibition, neither to add to it, nor diminiſh from it, (*Deut.* iv. 2.) though no Exception is made of any Privilege to be granted to the Prophets more than to other Men in this caſe. But they ſay, [c] that the Power of the Prophets reach'd only to a Temporary Diſpenſation, and gave them no Warrant to aboliſh any part of the Law. Which is true: But this Power in the Prophets, who were but Types of Chriſt, ſignify'd, that the *Meſſiah* himſelf was to have a more extenſive Power, and to come with full Authority to inſtitute a New Covenant inſtead of the Law, which was but a Type of it, as *Moſes* was of *Chriſt*. But this is not

[b] Atque ſic didicimus per Traditionem à priſcis Sapientibus. *In qualibet re, cum dixerit tibi Propheta; Tranſgredere verba legis, ſicut Elihu fecit in monte Carmel, audi eum, præterquam in Idololatria.* cum videlicet aliquid pro certo tempore futurum eſt. Sicut Elihu obtulit holocauſtum in extraneo loco, licet Jeruſalem ad hoc electa eſſet. Maimon. de Fundam. Legis, c. ix. §. 6.

[c] Si mandaverint omnes Prophetæ, ut violemus Præceptum pro tempore, tum audiendi ſunt; ſin vero dixerint, verbum hoc in æternum exciſum eſſe, tunc ſtrangulandi ſunt, quia Lex ſemper nobis noſtriſque filiis loquitur. Ib. §. 7.

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all, we are able to prove againſt the *Jews* from the Books of the Old Teſtament, that their Law was to ceaſe, when the *Meſſiah* was come.

The Goſpel is ſo far from containing any thing contrary to the Law, that it is the Fulfilling and Accompliſhment of it. The Moral Precepts are improv'd and advanc'd, and the Ceremonial and Ritual Part was not properly abrogated and aboliſh'd, but it continued for as long time as it was deſign'd to do, and then expir'd of it ſelf; it ſerv'd thoſe Ends for which it was inſtituted, and afterwards muſt of conſequence ceaſe. The Ceremonial Worſhip therefore was permitted to the *Jews*, who became Converts to the Chriſtian Faith, till the Deſtruction of their City and Temple, and then it was no longer practicable, but muſt of neceſſity ceaſe; and the Ceſſation of the Law of *Moſes*, when once it had its Period and Accompliſhment, was as much the Will of the Legiſlator, at its firſt Inſtitution, as its former Obligation could be.

The *Jewiſh* Law being Figurative and Typical, it follows, that it was to ceaſe of courſe, when the Things prefigur'd and typify'd by it, ſhould be brought to paſs, that is, when the *Meſſiah* ſhould come. For then the Types and Figures being fulfill'd, could be of no longer uſe, nor the Law which enjoin'd them, of any longer continuance, when once this principal Reaſon of it ceas'd, and all other ends deſign'd by it might be better attain'd without it, by the Worſhip of God *in Spirit and in Truth*. And this Law was ſo contrived, as not only to expire upon the fulfilling of it by the *Meſſiah*, but to become impracticable and impoſſible to be obſerv'd afterwards. I ſhall therefore prove the Ceſſation of the *Jewiſh* Law; I. Becauſe the *Meſſiah* is come, in whom it was fulfill'd. II. Becauſe it was foretold by the Prophets, that the Law ſhould ceaſe upon the coming of the *Meſſiah*. III. Becauſe

cauſe after the coming of the *Meſſiah*, it was to become impracticable and impoſſible to be obſerv'd.

I. The *Meſſiah* is come, in whom the Law is fulfill'd. As the coming of the *Meſſiah* was prefigur'd in the various Types and Ceremonies of the Law, which were therefore to receive their Accompliſhment in him, ſo it is manifeſt that our Saviour is the Meſſiah, ſince the Prophecies concerning the Meſſiah have been all fulfill'd in Him. This has been already prov'd at large; and the Prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Malachi* are ſo very plainly and undeniably fulfill'd, that [d] ſome of the *Jews*, to evade them, have been forc'd to ſay, that the Meſſiah was born before the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, tho' he doth not yet appear; but that he was ſeen at *Rome*, and has ever ſince lain conceal'd, as *Moſes* did in the Houſe of *Pharaoh*; and that the time will come, when he ſhall require the Diſmiſſion of the *Jews* from the *Pope*, as *Moſes* demanded of *Pharaoh* the Diſmiſſion of the Children of *Iſrael*. But they ſay, that he defers the Manifeſtation of himſelf, by reaſon of their Sins; and upon this account have made many ſolemn Humiliations, to implore his Help, and haſten his Coming; particularly *A. D.* MDII. they appointed a publick Humiliation for Young and Old, Men, Women and Children, in all parts of the World, for nigh a whole Year together. [e] *Trypho* did not deny that Chriſt was born, and might be ſomewhere unknown, but ſaid, that he could not know himſelf to be Chriſt, nor work Miracles, till *Elias* had anointed him, and manifeſted him to the World. [f] Others have ſaid, that there is to be a Third Temple, and during the time of the laſt, the Meſſiah will come, only becauſe *Abraham* call'd the Place where the Temple ſtood, a Mountain, *Iſaac* a Field, and *Jacob* an Houſe. Some are of Opinion, that their Sins hinder his Coming; ſome a-

[d] Munſter. de Meſſia. [e] Juſt. Martyr. Dialog. [f] Munſter. ib.

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gain think, that they are neither ſinful enough, nor righteous enough: For, [g] ſay they, he muſt come in a Generation altogether ſinful, or altogether righteous. The ſecond Temple appear'd as *nothing in compariſon of the Glory of the firſt*, when *Haggai* foretold, that the *Glory of this latter Houſe ſhould be greater than of the former*, Hag. ii. 3, 9. It has been a conſtant Tradition among the *Jews*, that the ſecond Temple was in five reſpects inferior to the firſt; ſince it had neither the Fire from Heaven, nor the Anointing Oil, nor the Ark, nor the Holy Ghoſt, or Spirit of Prophecy and Miracles, nor *Urim* and *Thummim*. So that the ſecond Temple being in all theſe reſpects inferior to the firſt, could, according to *Haggai*'s Prophecy (*ch.* ii. 9.) excel that, only in the Privilege of Chriſt's Preſence in it. This is an Argument, ſays [h] one very converſant in the Rabbinical Writings, to which the Jews can find nothing to reply. And a [i] Rabbin of great Note has, from more Ancient Expoſitors, declar'd *the Glory of this latter Houſe*, to be meant of *Spiritual Glory*.

The Prophecy of *Daniel*'s Weeks is ſo punctually in all its Circumſtances fulfill'd, that not only [k] *Joſephus* and the modern *Jews* apply it to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Titus*, but [l] ſome of the *Jews*, when they could not deny the Computation to be true, and to agree exactly with the time of our Saviour's Birth, have even dar'd to ſay, that *Daniel* himſelf was miſtaken in the Account; others have confeſs'd that all the Terms of Time aſſign'd for the coming of the *Meſſiah* are paſt, and that now their only Hopes of Delive-

[g] Non veniet filius David, niſi ad generationem, cujus omnes vel ſunt puri, vel impuri. Abravanel de cap. Fidei, c. xiv.

[h] Bochart. Hieroz. P. i. l. 2. c. 35.

[i] R. Moſes Elſach Comment. in Hag. ii. apud Vorſt. Not. in Abravanel. de cap. Fidei, c. xiv.

[k] Joſeph. Antiq. Jud. l. x. c. 12. Secundum Scriptum Judæi apud Limborch. [l] Lud. Viv. de ver. Fid. l. iii.

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rance and Redemption are to be placed in their Repentance. But [m] Rabbi *Nehumias* who liv'd fifty years before Chriſt, declared that the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, according to *Daniel*'s Prophecy, could not be deferr'd beyond the ſpace of fifty years longer, as *Grotius* has obſerv'd from the *Talmud*. We are [n] told, that the *Jews* are all agreed in the Thirteen Articles of Faith drawn up by *Maimonides*, in his Commentary upon the *Miſna*; inſomuch that [o] whoever disbelieves any one of theſe Articles, has renounced his Religion. And the Twelfth Article contains, that no Time for the Coming of the *Meſſiah* is to be prefix'd, or determin'd, from any Explication of Scripture, inaſmuch as the [p] Rabbins had denounced a Curſe upon all, who ſhould preſume to compute the Time. [q] One, who is believ'd to have been too much addicted to Judaiſm, has declared that the Talmudiſts and modern *Jews*, to maintain their Religion againſt Chriſtians, have perverted both Chronology and Hiſtory, in Contradiction to *Philo* and *Joſephus*, as well as to all other Authors. Divers [r] of the *Jews* place the Paſſion of Chriſt ſixty nine years before our common Account of the year in which he truly ſuffer'd; others pretend another different Account without the leaſt Reaſon for ei-

[m] Grot. de Verit. lib. v. §. 14. & inter Sarrav. Epiſt.

[n] Leo Moden. c. ult.

[o] Rabb. Abraham Jagel Catechiſm. Jud. p. 6.

[p] Quemadmodum dixere Sapp. cel. m. in cap. Cheleck. *illaqueetur animus ſupputantium terminos.* Maimon. apud Abravanel. de cap. Fid. cap. i.

[q] Talmudici ſuæ ſectæ nimium addicti, ut divinas ſortes & oracula ſuo judicio interpretarentur, ducentos annos de ætate mundi detraxerunt, ne cum Chriſtianis convenirent. Bodin. Method. Hiſt. c. viii. Nimis enim pertinaces Hebræi juniores tempora Danielis depravârunt, ut contra omnium Scriptorum fidem enumerent quinque duntaxat imperatores Perſarum. ——— ſed id fecerunt, ne ab oraculis Prophetæ perperam intellectis recedere viderentur. Hos igitur refellere neceſſe eſt tum Joſippi & Philonis autoritate, tum etiam orbium cœleſtium motu, &c. Ibid.

[r] *Biſhop* Pearſon *on the Creed*, *Art.* iv.

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ther pretence, but this ſhews how deſperate a cauſe they are engaged in, which forceth them upon ſuch Artifices; for we have the expreſs Teſtimony of *Tacitus*, that he ſuffered under *Pontius Pilate*. They interpret *Iſa.* vii. 14. where it is propheſied that the *Meſſiah* was to be born of a Virgin, contrary to the ſenſe of their Fore-fathers, and therefore reject the ancient Tranſlation of that Verſe by the *Septuagint*, as [s] *Juſtin* Martyr urged againſt the *Jews* of his time; and [t] *Irenæus*, after him, againſt the *Ebionites*. The *Jews* likewiſe, inſtead of *they pierced my hands, and my feet*, read, *like a Lion my hands, and my feet*, by a change of *Jod* for *Vau*. The whole Verſe is thus; *For Dogs have compaſſed me, the Aſſembly of the Wicked have encloſed me, like a Lion, my hands, and my feet*, Pſal. xxii. 16. which not only makes no Senſe, nor is capable of any tolerable Expoſition, as appears by the abſurd [u] Comments of *Kimchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and other *Rabbins* upon it, but is contrary to the *Septuagint*, and to the *Hebrew* Text, acknowledged by their own [x] *Maſora*, which was compiled in the ſixth Century. Theſe Texts, one proving Chriſt's Birth of a Virgin, the other, his Death by the Croſs, are expounded by us according to their own ancient and moſt authentick Interpreters. In *Origen*'s time, they expounded *Iſa.* liii. of the Nation of the *Jews*, not of any particular Perſon; though, as [y] *Origen* argued in a Diſputation with them, the tenor of the whole Chapter is a plain confutation of this way of expounding it, and eſpecially theſe words of the 8th Verſe, *for the Tranſgreſſion of my People was he ſtricken*. By the Perſon ſtricken, cannot be underſtood the People, for whoſe Tranſgreſſion he is ſaid to have been ſtricken.

[s] Juſt. Mart. Dialog. [t] Iren. l. 3. c. 24.
[u] Bochart. Hieroz. Part. 1. l. 3. c. 6. [x] Ib. §. 4.
[y] Origen. contr. Celſ. lib. 1.

[z] But

But they have found out another Evaſion, by pretending that there are to be two *Meſſiahs*, one the Son of *Joſeph*, who is to be a ſuffering *Meſſiah*, and the other the Son of *David*, who is to enjoy all manner of temporal Proſperity and Power. [a] *Maimonides* endeavours to diſprove the ſufficiency of Miracles to atteſt a Divine Miſſion, pretending that the *Iſraelites* were not convinced of the Authority of *Moſes*'s Miſſion, by his Miracles, but only by the Preſence of God upon Mount *Sinai*. Which is expreſly contrary to the declared intention of God in the Miracles wrought by *Moſes*, and is falſe in Fact: for *the People believed*, when the *Signs* were done in their *ſight*, Exod. iv. 30, 31. and they never had been ſo ſtubborn and rebellious, before the Commandments were given upon Mount *Sinai*, as they were afterwards. For before the Two Tables were brought down to them, they had made the molten Calf. But this is only a contrivance to evade the force of that Argument from the Miracles of our Saviour, which prove him to be the *Meſſiah*, according to expreſs Prophecies. [b] *Maimonides* was in ſuch a perplexity in the caſe, that he ſometimes affirms, and ſometimes denies, that the *Meſſiah* would work Miracles; and at other times, attempts to invalidate the deſign and effect of them.

So plain is it, that the Prophecies which the *Jews* themſelves of old underſtood of Chriſt, are fulfilled in our Saviour, and ſo unavoidably do they contradict all their own ancient Interpretations of Scripture, when they will not allow them to be fulfilled in him: For that they are fulfilled, it is evident; and they can

[a] Targ. in Cant. iv. 5. vii. 3. *See* Grot. ib. lib. v. §. 19. *Biſhop* Pearſon, ib.

[a] Iſraelitæ non crediderunt Moſi M. n. propter miracula, quæ patravit, &c. Maimon. de Fundam. Legis, c. 8. §. 1. Unde verò ſola ſtatio in monte Sinai eſt Probatio de Prophetiæ veritate? ib. §. 3.

[b] In Miſn. apud Vorſt. not. in Abravan. de cap. Fidei, c. 14.

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aſſign no other Perſon in whom they have been fulfilled.

II. It was foretold by the Prophets, that the Law ſhould ceaſe upon the coming of the *Meſſiah*. It is evident from the Prophets, that in ſome Years after Chriſt, *Jeruſalem* was to be no longer the ſeat of the *Jewiſh* Power and Government, nor the place of Worſhip. And their Prophecies ſuppoſe the Ceſſation of the *Jewiſh* Law upon a two-fold account: 1. From the Deſtruction of the Temple. 2. From the Diſperſion of the People of the *Jews*, and the Deſtruction of their City.

1. From the Deſtruction of the Temple. The Prophet *Daniel* foretold, that after the *Meſſiah* was cut off, the *Sanctuary* ſhould be *deſtroyed*, and the *Sacrifice* and the *Oblation* ſhould *ceaſe*, and that there ſhould be Deſolation *even until the Conſummation*, Dan. ix. 26, 27. Since the Sanctuary is laid waſte and deſolate, and by this Prophecy is never to be rebuilt, the Temple being the place of all their Worſhip and Solemnities; that failing, their whole Worſhip muſt fail with it. And whenever the *Jews* have attempted to rebuild their Temple, they have been hindred from doing it, and particularly (as I have ſeveral times already obſerved) in the time of *Julian* the Apoſtate, by miraculous and dreadful Judgments, related by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, an Heathen Hiſtorian, who lived at that time, and by a [c] *Jewiſh* Writer. And when they have been permitted to build them Synagogues and Places of Worſhip in all other Parts of the World, that Place alone has been denied them in which by their Law they were indiſpenſably bound to worſhip. The Morning and Evening Sacrifice was to be at the Temple. The High Prieſt was to enter into the Holy Place once every Year, with the Blood of one Sin-offering for himſelf, and of another for the People, *Exod.* xxx. 10.

[c] Wagenſeil. Annot. ad excerpta Gemaræ. cap. 1. p. 236.

Levit.

Levit. xvi. 2. All the Males were obliged to reſort to *Jeruſalem*, to worſhip thrice every Year; and the place of their Worſhip was more ſtrictly enjoined than the time. For if any Man were upon a Journey, or Unclean, a ſecond Paſſover was appointed for him, but it could be obſerved at no other place but *Jeruſalem*, upon any occaſion whatſoever, *Numb.* ix. 10. *Deut.* xvi. 5. And therefore, during the Captivity at *Babylon*, they did not celebrate theſe Feaſts of the *Paſſover* of *Pentecoſt*, and of *Tabernacles*; how could they *ſing the Lord's Song in a ſtrange Land?* Pſal. cxxxvii. 4. [d] *Ceſtius* took *Lydda* without any oppoſition, when the People were gone to keep the Feaſt of Tabernacles at *Jeruſalem*. And the Siege of *Jeruſalem* by *Titus*, which ended in the Deſtruction both of the City and Temple, was begun at the time of the Paſſover, when the whole Nation, ſays [e] *Joſephus*, was, by Fate, ſhut up together, as in a Priſon, and the crowded City was ſurrounded with War. Theſe were ſigns that they were no longer God's peculiar People, nor under the protection of thoſe Promiſes, which by the Law were made to them, and had ever been fulfilled till the time of the Promiſe was expired. [f] St. *Chryſoſtom* blames the *Jews* of his time, for obſerving the Law in the Countries whither they were diſpers'd, which he proves to be contrary to God's Commandment, and to the Practice of their Anceſtors. *Julian* ſays, that the *Jews* did in [g] ſome places ſacrifice, tho' they could not perform that Worſhip as the Law preſcribed. But they ſeem to have ſacrificed rather to pleaſe him, than

[d] Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 23. [e] Ib. l. 7. c. 17.

[f] Chryſ. adv. Judeos, lib. 1. Tom. 6. Sav. Edit.

[g] Θύουσι μὲν ἐν Ἀδραάχοις Ἰουδαῖοι. Jul. apud Cyr. l. 9. p. 305. Interpres vertit, *ſacrificant quidem in ſuis domibus Judæi.* Intelligendum verò de *Adrato*, in Arabiâ Petræâ, Paleſtinæ confini, vel de aliâ quadam urbe; cum præſertim, nec ubique, nec ſponte ſuâ, ſed Juliano potiùs auctore, ſacrificia obtuliſſe Judæi videantur.

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of their own accord: for [h] he complains, that they were very backward in offering Sacrifices, becauſe their Temple was deſtroyed, and therefore he deſigned to rebuild it. Which was a thing he had ſo much at heart, that he had [i] reſolved to attempt it again, if he had returned victorious from *Perſia*. The modern *Jews* confeſs, that their Worſhip is impracticable in their preſent condition; they acknowledge, that they ought to offer Sacrifice no where elſe but at the Temple of *Jeruſalem*; the obſervation of the Paſſover among them now, is without ſacrificing the Paſchal Lamb; they keep the Feaſts of *Pentecoſt* and *Tabernacles* without the appointed Sacrifices; and they obſerve the Day of Atonement without the Sacrifice of Expiation.

2. The Deſtruction of the City of *Jeruſalem*, and the final Diſperſion of the whole Nation of the *Jews* proves, that their Law is at an end. *Jacob* plainly foretold both the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and the end of the Power and Authority of the Nation of the *Jews* upon his coming. *The Sceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be*, Gen. xlix. 10. This Prophecy was by the ancient *Jews* always underſtood of the *Meſſiah*, as is evident by the *Targums*; and it appears to be fulfil'd in our Saviour, both becauſe the *Jewiſh* Government in his time was drawing towards its final Period, and becauſe the People of all Nations have been gather'd to him, and have been made Proſelytes to his Religion. The Sovereignty was in due time to be placed in the Tribe of *Judah*; which was fulfilled in *David*'s being advanced to the Kingdom: And from that time, the *Sceptre* and the *Law-giver*, that is, the Power of their Arms, and the Authority of their Laws, was not ſo to depart, as to become extinct, till the *Meſſiah* came; which implies, that ſoon

[h] Ib. p. 324. [i] Jul. Epiſt. 25. Fragment. Epiſt. p. 295.

after his coming, they were both to ceaſe, as we ſee they have long ſince actually done. The accompliſhment of *Jacob*'s Prophecy was gradual; *Herod* was of another Nation, but a Proſelyte, and upon that account he might be ſtil'd a *Jew*; as [k] *Iſ. Caſaubon* has prov'd againſt *Baronius*: And when he was made King of the *Jews*, this was as a Warning to awaken them to expect the full Accompliſhment of this Prophecy, which was brought to paſs in the final Deſtruction of their Government. The *Jewiſh* Government all along, under all changes, was ſtill denominated from *Judah*, tho' that Tribe was not always in chief Power; and even under *Herod*, who was an *Idumean*, it had its Title from *Judah*; as the *Roman* Empire retain'd its old Denomination, when divers of the Emperors were not *Romans* by Birth. But when the *Meſſiah* was come, the Sceptre was to depart from *Judah*, and there were no more to be any Laws in force amongſt that People, who had been ſo long known under that Denomination, which they receiv'd from him.

And this Prophecy of *Jacob*, in which he foretels the condition of the ſeveral Tribes, has a plain Reference to the Promiſed Land, and is to be underſtood of the *Jewiſh* Government in the Land of *Canaan*; for he there deſcribes the Borders of it. From the time that they were in poſſeſſion of that Land, the People of the *Jews* never had loſt all their Right and Title to it, before the coming of Chriſt, but ſtill retain'd their Right, during their abode in *Babylon*, and were aſſur'd that they ſhould again be put in poſſeſſion after a Captivity of ſeventy Years; and in token of this, *Jeremiah* purchaſed a Field of *Hanameel*, his Uncle's Son, and ſubſcribed and ſealed the Writings, and took Witneſſes, and paid down the Money publickly *before all the Jews that ſat in the Court of the Priſon*, and

[k] Exercitat. 1. Num. 5.

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the Evidences were to be kept in an Earthen Vessel. *For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Houses, and Fields, and Vineyards, shall be possess'd again in this Land*, Jer. xxxii. 14. But when the time of *Jacob*'s Prophecy was expir'd, and *Shiloh* was come, they were driven out, never to be restor'd again.

The *Romans*, the most generous of any People, dealt so hardly with no other Nation as with the *Jews*, who yet had to do with one of the most merciful Princes that stands upon record in History. If *Tiberius*, or *Caligula*, or *Nero*, had destroyed them, it might have been ascrib'd to the cruelty of their Temper; but when *Titus*, who endeavour'd to save them, was by their own obstinacy forc'd upon their Destruction, after they had by their Dissentions made themselves a Prey to him, there was the visible Hand of God in it; as [l] *Josephus* often confesses, and as [m] *Titus* himself declar'd, when he beheld the Towers and Fortifications after the City was taken. If they could have agreed, either in their own defence, or in any terms of submission to him, they would have been far from suffering in that Extremity. When *Pompey* and *Crassus* entred *Jerusalem*, the time of its Destruction was not yet come, but it was reserv'd to *Titus*, whose peculiar Character it was, that he oblig'd all Men, and who was stil'd the *Love and Delight of Mankind*, unwillingly to do that which neither *Pompey* nor *Crassus* would do. It is well urg'd by a [n] learned *Jew*, tho' he makes a wrong Inference from it. Did the same thing, says he, befal any other People? Did the *Romans* drive the *Germans*, the *Britains*, the *Gauls*, the *Spaniards*, the *Greeks*, or the *Asiatick* Nations into Captivity, and disperse them throughout all Parts of the World? They rather endeavour'd to preserve

[l] De Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 10, 11, 16. [m] Ib. l. 7. c. 15.
[n] Secundum scriptum Judæi apud Limbroch.

them, that their ſeveral Countries might not want Inhabitants.

And tho' the *Jews* have been generally obſerv'd to have great Riches in the Nations where they live, they have never been able by any power or intereſt to get themſelves re-eſtabliſh'd in their Country and Government, but have been diſappointed as often as they have attempted it, tho' with never ſo much probability of ſucceſs. So evident it is by the experience of ſo many Ages, that however it fares with particular Perſons of that Nation, yet they never are to be united again, as a Community, or Body of People, to live under their ancient Laws according to the Moſaical Conſtitution. They have no City, no Government, nor ever are to have any; and therefore thoſe Laws can now no longer be in force, which ſuppoſe the continuance of their Government. Their Genealogies are loſt, upon which the diſtinction of their Tribes and Families, and the ſucceſſion of their Prieſthood did depend, which has been acknowledged by the ° learnedſt Man, perhaps, that ever was ſuſpected of apoſtatizing from Chriſtianity to Judaiſm; ſo that they are without an Altar, without a Prieſt, without a Sacrifice, and without any poſſibility of knowing the Deſcent and Lineage of their *Meſſiah*, whom they expect to come; and by conſequence, cannot know him if he ſhould come, having no way to diſtinguiſh that Tribe and Family of which the Prophecies declare the *Meſſiah* was to be. In the *Babylonian* Captivity, there were Αἰχμαλωτάρχαι, who kept up Order and Government amongſt them; and that, beſides, was at

° Soli Hebræi generis antiquitate certiſſimâ populis omnibus præſtant: nemo tamen ſuam Tribum nunc ciere poteſt; ſed omnes inter ſe confuſi ſtirpem agnoſcunt; ramos ignorant: Gens verò ſacerdotum, quæ nobilitatis ſummum genus ab Aarone repetens, duobus annorum millibus ac trecentis floruerat, Gothicis ac Vandalicis cladibus creditur interiiſſe, non ſine magno Divinæ Ultionis argumento. Bodin. Method. Hiſt. c. 9.

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the moſt but a ſuſpenſion of their Power, it was no utter extirpation of all Rule and Authority; their Genealogies were preſerved, and the diſtinction of their Tribes and Families known; their deliverance out of that Captivity, with the time and manner of it, and the very Name of their Deliverer was foretold, *Iſa.* xliv. 28. *Jer.* xxv. 12. *Dan.* ix. 2. And in that Captivity they had Prophets to direct and ſupport them under their Affliction, and give them aſſurance of a Reſtoration, but now they do not ſo much as pretend to have any. The Deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of the *Ægyptian* Bondage was likewiſe foretold, with the punctual time of it, *Gen.* xv. 13, 14. And in general, God declares that when at any time, for their Sins, they were led into Captivity, and diſperſed among the Heathens, tho' they were driven unto the utmoſt part of Heaven, yet upon their repentance he would *turn their Captivity, and have compaſſion upon them, and would return, and gather them from all the Nations, whither he had ſcattered them*, Deut. xxx. 2, 3. Nehem. i. 8, 9. And this Promiſe muſt have been in force, as long as their Law and Conſtitution laſted, and could have no limitation but the final and determined period of it. The time for the duration of the *Jewiſh* Law and Government being expired, all Promiſes made to them as a diſtinct People and Nation, muſt be expired with it; whereas, if their Law were ſtill in force, the promiſe of their being reſtored to their Land and Government, would undoubtedly before this time, have been fulfilled to them. For beſides, that their Sins, at their return from their Captivity in *Babylon*, were very great, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that for ſo many Ages their Sins ſhould hinder that a Remnant at leaſt ſhould not be reſtored, if the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy had not received its final period in the deſtruction of their City and Nation. [p] *Redde*

[p] Tertul. adv. Judæos, c. 13.

statum Judææ, quem Christus inveniat, & alium contendè venire. This, which was a good Argument in *Tertullian*'s time, is improv'd still in every Age since. For if the state of the *Jewish* Nation was not such then as their *Messiah* was to find at his Coming, there is the less cause for them after so long time to hope that they shall ever be restored to such a Condition, as to have any reason to expect him.

III. After the Coming of the *Messiah*, the *Jewish* Law was to become impracticable, and impossible to be observ'd. For if the City and Temple were not destroy'd, the Confinement of the *Jewish* Worship to one certain Place, must necessarily imply an Alteration in their Worship upon the Coming of the *Messiah*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*; who could not all be suppos'd to assemble thrice every year at *Jerusalem*; and therefore the Prophets foretold, that *Jerusalem* should then be no longer the only place of God's Worship, but that Men should worship him in any place of the World. 'Tis true, the Prophets often mention the Resort which should be made from all Nations to *Jerusalem*, and to the Temple, or the *Mountain of the Lord*. But then these are Mystical Expressions; for the City of *Jerusalem*, and the Temple, are us'd by the Prophets as Types of the Christian Church; and therefore *Ezekiel* [q] describes the Temple larger than the whole City of *Jerusalem*, and the City in greater Dimensions than all the Land of *Canaan*, to shew that we are not to understand these Expressions literally. A Priesthood after the Order of *Melchisedek*, different from that of *Aaron*, was propheſy'd of, *Psal.* cx. 4. and a New Covenant different from that which was made with the Children of *Israel* upon their coming out of the Land of *Ægypt*, Jerem. xxxi. 31, 32. And this Covenant was to extend to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*. *And it shall come*

[q] Lightfoot's *Prospect of the Temple*, Chap. ii.

to

to paſs, that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, ſhall all Fleſh come to worſhip before me, ſaith the Lord, Iſai. lxvi. 23. *For from the riſing of the Sun, even unto the going down of the ſame, my Name ſhall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place Incenſe ſhall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering: for my Name ſhall be great among the Heathen, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts,* Malach. i. 11.

If againſt all this it be alledg'd, That the *Moſaical* Law was to endure *for ever*, it ought to be conſider'd, what Senſe that Expreſſion bears in the Law it ſelf. And that Expreſſion is there uſed to denote the Continuance of any thing which was not deſign'd for ſome particular occaſion or ſeaſon only, but was to laſt as long as the Nature and general Deſign of its Inſtitution would admit. The Servant whoſe Ear was bored, was to ſerve his Maſter *for ever*, Exod. xxi. 6. by which is to be underſtood, not all his Life, but only till the year of Jubilee; whereas he that had not his Ear bored, was to be ſet free in the ſeventh year, *ver.* 2. And even before the year of Jubilee, he whoſe Ear was bored, might be freed with his Maſter's Conſent; [r] either by Manumiſſion, or Redemption, and was at liberty upon the Death of his Maſter, not being bound to ſerve his Son. *Their anointing ſhall ſurely be an everlaſting Prieſthood throughout their Generations,* *Exod.* xl. 15. which can be underſtood to extend no farther, than as long as their Genealogies were preſerv'd, and the Tribe and Generations of the High-Prieſts could be diſtinguiſhed. *I will abide in thy Tabernacle for ever,* Pſal. lxi. 4. or, in other Words, *all the days of my life,* Pſal. xxvii. 4. *Samuel* was brought by his Mother to abide before the Lord *for ever*; that is, during his Life, 1 *Sam.* i. 22. And by parity of Reaſon thoſe Statutes and Laws are ſaid to be eſtabliſhed *for ever*, which were deſign'd to be perpetual

[r] Grot. ad loc.

and ſtanding Laws; not temporary, during their journeying in the Wilderneſs only, as others were, but to continue as long as the Conſtitution of the Government was to laſt; and in this Senſe the *Jews* themſelves [f] have taken the Word; and it is ſufficiently explain'd *Deut.* xii. 1. *Theſe are the Statutes and Judgments which ye ſhall obſerve to do in the Land, which the Lord God of thy Fathers giveth thee to poſſeſs it all the days that ye live upon the Earth*; or, as we read *ver.* 19. *as long as thou liveſt upon thy Earth*; that is, their Law was obligatory to them as long as they had poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, or retain'd any Right to poſſeſs it by God's Donation: But thoſe Statutes and Judgments which were to be obſerv'd in the Land which the Lord had given them to poſſeſs, can no longer be of any Obligation to them, when they are finally depriv'd of that Land. Rabbi *Joſeph Albo*, from the Texts now cited, acknowledg'd, that the Perpetuity of the Law of *Moſes* could not be prov'd from the Signification of the Word *Olam*; which [g] *Menaſſeh Ben Iſrael* cannot deny, but pretends, that there is ſomething particular in this caſe, as it is apply'd to the Law: becauſe it is not only ſaid, that their Law ſhould be in force for ever, but that it ſhould continue to their Seed for all Generations. The Texts, which he produces, are theſe. *And God ſaid unto Abraham, thou ſhalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations*, Gen. xvii. 9. *And ye ſhall obſerve the feaſt of unleavened Bread. For in this ſelf-ſame day, have I brought your Armies out of the land of Ægypt. Therefore ſhall ye obſerve this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever*, Exod. xii. 17. *Wherefore the children of Iſrael ſhall keep the Sabbath, to obſerve the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant*, Exod. xxxi. 16. But if we compare the

[f] Id. de Veritat. lib. v. §. 7.
[g] Menaſſ. Ben Iſr. Conciliat. in Levit. Qu. 7.

Texts

Texts following, we ſhall find, that by this Argument the Jews muſt have been in poſſeſſion of the promis'd Land to the end of the World, as well as under perpetual Obligations to obſerve the Law of *Moſes*. *For all the land, which thou ſeeſt, to thee will I give, and to thy ſeed for ever*, Gen. xiii. 15. *And I will give unto thee and to thy Seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion, and I will be their God*, Gen. xvii. 8. *Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy ſeed after thee, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion*, Geneſ. xlviii. 4. This was God's ſolemn and repeated Promiſe to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, which *Moſes* beſeech'd God to remember, when he interceded for the Children of *Iſrael*, after their making the molten Calf. *Remember Abraham, Iſaac, and Iſrael thy ſervants: to whom thou ſwareſt, I will multiply your ſeed, as the ſtars of heaven, and all this land, that I have ſpoken of, will I give unto your ſeed, and they ſhall inherit it for ever*, Exod. xxxii. 13. From hence it is manifeſt, that this Argument concludes as much for their being kept in conſtant Poſſeſſion of *Canaan*, as for the Duration of their Law: And their having been ſo long diſpoſſeſt of that Land, is a Confutation in Fact of all that can be argued to that purpoſe, either from the Word *Olam*, or from any other Expreſſion. The Land of *Canaan* was given to the Children of *Iſrael* for an *everlaſting poſſeſſion*; but this muſt be underſtood in a limited Senſe: For they have been long out of the Poſſeſſion of that Land. It is in vain therefore for them to contend, that their Law is of perpetual Obligation, unleſs they could maintain the perpetual Poſſeſſion of that Land, in which it was to be obſerv'd. But it is apparent, that by *everlaſting* is to be underſtood ſuch a Continuance of Time, as was to laſt as long as the Covenant of Circumciſion, upon the Inſtitution whereof the Land of *Canaan* was promiſed, *to Abraham and his*

his ſeed after him, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion, Geneſ. xvii. 8. The Covenant of Circumciſion being ſo long ſince at an end, God has fulfill'd his Promiſe to *Abraham* and his Poſterity, tho' they have been for ſo many Ages out of Poſſeſſion of the promis'd Land; becauſe their Poſſeſſion of that Land was to be but of equal Duration with that Covenant. So that God has at once both acquitted himſelf of his Promiſe, and diſcover'd that that Covenant is no longer of any Obligation.

But *Jeremiah* ſpeaking of a *New Covenant* propheſy'd, that the *ſeed of Iſrael* ſhould never *ceaſe from being a Nation*, and that God would never *caſt off all the ſeed of Iſrael*, which is ſet forth in ſuch ample manner, and with ſuch particular Emphaſis, that we muſt conclude it to extend to all Ages of the World. *Thus ſaith the Lord, which giveth the ſun for a light by day, and the Ordinances of the moon and of the ſtars for a light by night, which divideth the ſea, when the waves thereof roar: the Lord of Hoſts is his name. If thoſe ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the ſeed of Iſrael alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a Nation before me for ever. Thus ſaith the Lord, if Heaven above can be meaſured, and the foundations of the earth ſearched out beneath; I will alſo caſt off all the ſeed of Iſrael, for all that they have done, ſaith the Lord*, Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, 37. This Prophecy, we know, has been fulfill'd hitherto, partly by the Converſion of many of the *Seed of Iſrael*, both at the firſt Propagation of the Goſpel, and in latter Ages; and partly by their continuing a diſtinct People from all the Nations, wherever they live diſpers'd; which is a thing never known, of any other captive and diſpers'd People. It is the receiv'd and ancient Doctrine of the [u] Rabbins, that God by the Meſſiah would give them a New Law, and make a New Covenant with them, and that under him God

[u] Abravanel. de cap. Fidei, c. xiii. cum Not. Vorſtii.

would

would allow them to eat Swine's Fleſh; and that all their Feaſts were to ceaſe, but the Feaſt of *Purim*, and the Day of Atonement. But *Abravanel* pretends, that this Ceſſation is not a Subverſion of the Feaſts themſelves, but a Ceſſation of the Memory of them, becauſe all thoſe Feaſts were in Remembrance of their coming out of *Ægypt*. The meaning therefore, ſays he, is this, that the Children of *Iſrael* at the time of their Deliverance, ſhall not apply their Minds to the Remembrance of the Wonders and Miracles, which God wrought for them, when he brought them out of *Ægypt*, becauſe when they ſhall ſee the exceeding great Miracles, which God will do before them in the days of the Meſſiah, they ſhall forget the former, as the Scripture alſo affirms, *they ſhall not ſay the Lord liveth, who brought you out of Ægypt*, &c. But the true Reaſon, why, according to this Tradition of the Jews, the Feaſt of *Purim* and the Day of Atonement only were not to ceaſe under the Meſſiah, ſeems to be, becauſe by aſſigning theſe Two as the only Times which were to be obſerv'd, is ſignify'd, that Days of Repentance and Thankſgiving only would then be of Religious Obſervation: for to this purpoſe, ſay the [x] Rabbins, that all Offerings ſhall ceaſe in the World to come (ſo they term the Kingdom of the Meſſiah) but Confeſſion and Thankſgiving ſhall not ceaſe. And what *Abravanel* argues, that the Feaſts themſelves were not to ceaſe, but only the Remembrance of thoſe things, whereof they were appointed to be Memorials, is a palpable Evaſion. For how ſhould the Remembrance ceaſe of a thing, of which conſtant Memorials were continued, which were inſtituted for this very end, to be *a ſtatute for ever throughout their generations in all their dwellings*, Lev. xxiii. 14. Which Words are repeated and apply'd to all their Annual Solemn Feſtivals, and of the Paſſover in particular it

[x] Ibid.

was

was commanded to be obſerv'd, that *thou mayſt remember the day when thou cameſt forth out of the land of Ægypt, all the days of thy life*, Deut. xvi. 3. And there is no ground for that Anſwer, that by *all the days of thy life* is meant no longer than till the time of the Meſſiah, in reference to the *Remembrance* of the Deliverance from their Bondage in *Ægypt*; if the *Obſervation* of the Paſſover inſtituted in perpetual Memory of it, were afterwards to be retained. The Law of *Moſes* was to laſt to the end of the *World*, or *State* of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation and Government; for in the Prophetick Style the Coming of the Meſſiah was a New Creation, *Iſai.* lxv. 17. lxvi. 22. and his Kingdom was wont by [y] the Jews to be called *the World to come.*

The Ceremonial Law therefore by its Original Deſign and Inſtitution being to continue in force but till the Coming of Chriſt, he gave the Accompliſhment to it, and put a final Period to its Obligation, inſtituting his Goſpel in its ſtead, which had been prefigur'd by the Law, and foretold both by *Moſes* and the Prophets, and is to continue to the end of the World.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Sinful Examples Recorded in the Scriptures.

AS ſome have endeavour'd to excuſe their own Sins, by alledging the Sinful Examples which we find mention'd in the Scriptures; ſo others, who are no leſs fond of imitating them, yet have from hence taken a pretence for Objections and Cavils. I ſhall therefore ſhew, that the bad Examples in ſome

[y] Lightf. Harm. §. ix.

Actions

Actions of Men whom we find in all other reſpects commended in the Scriptures, are far from being propoſed for our Imitation; but there is great reaſon why the Faults and Miſcarriages of the beſt Men ſhould be deliver'd down to us in the Scriptures for our Caution and Prevention, as well as upon other accounts.

I. Several Paſſages of the Scriptures contain only Matter of Fact, and that very briefly expreſs'd; and a bare Narrative of any Action, implies neither the Approbation nor the Cenſure of it, but only declares that ſuch a thing was done, and in ſuch a manner: but the Nature of the Fact it ſelf, with the Circumſtances of it, or ſome Command or Permiſſion, or Prohibition in Scripture, muſt diſcover the Goodneſs or Lawfulneſs, or the Wickedneſs of the Action. No Hiſtorian is ſuppoſed to approve of all which he relates; but he muſt report bad as well as good deeds, who will do the part of a faithful Hiſtorian.

II. The Rules of Good and Evil are plainly delivered in the Scriptures, by which we are to judge of Actions; and we are to conform our Actions not to the Example of Men, but to the Law of God. We are forewarn'd to follow no Man's Example, when it is contrary to the Divine Law; and therefore it could not be neceſſary in the relating of every evil Action to ſet a Mark of Infamy upon it, and a Caution againſt the Imitation of it.

III. The Relation of the bad Actions of Good Men may be of great uſe and benefit, tho' we are not to follow, but avoid them; Becauſe,

1. This ſhews the Sincerity of the Pen-Men of the Scriptures, that they ſpare no Perſon whatſoever, but relate the plain Matter of Fact, even tho' themſelves be concern'd, when it is never ſo much to their diſgrace; as in the Denial of St. *Peter*, and other inſtances.

2. By

2. By this, we learn the frailty of humane Nature, and the neceſſary dependence that the beſt Men muſt have upon God for his Grace in the performing any good Action; *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift, is from above*, James i. 17.

3. We learn from hence, that God can bring Good out of Evil, and doth often over-rule even the worſt Actions to the accompliſhment of the beſt Ends, and *putteth no truſt in his Saints*, Job xv. 15.

There is a remarkable Inſtance to this purpoſe in the caſe of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, when *Jacob* came by fraud and ſubtilty, and depriv'd his Brother of the Bleſſing. [a] It was in ancient Times cuſtomary to offer that of which they were to eat, in ſacrifice, eſpecially on ſo ſolemn an Occaſion, as a Father's giving his final Bleſſing; and as in this caſe, foretelling the Fate of his Poſterity: And therefore, when *Jacob* had by ſubtilty got the Bleſſing of his Father, *Iſaac* could not recal it to confer it upon *Eſau*, becauſe what was done in ſo ſolemn a manner, had a religious Obligation amounting to that of an Oath; and Oaths, tho' obtain'd by Fraud, were obligatory, as we learn from the caſe of the *Gibeonites*: He had *bleſſed Jacob before the Lord*; and the Prediction that *the Elder ſhould ſerve the Younger*, (Gen. xxv. 23.) with *Eſau*'s deſpiſing and ſelling his Birth-right, might now probably come into *Iſaac*'s Mind; whereupon, tho' he did not approve of the Fraud by which the Bleſſing was obtain'd, yet he knew it to be irrevocable, and that the Divine Purpoſe and Prediction would be accompliſh'd thereby; and what he had by a Prophetick Spirit confer'd, it was not in his power to recal. The Relation therefore of this matter doth not juſtifie *Jacob*'s Behaviour in it, but manifeſts the over-ruling Providence of God, to make any means whatſoever inſtrumental to his gracious Ends, which

[a] Caſaub. in Athenæ. lib. 1. c. 11.

can

can never be diſappointed by any Actions of Men: for if they depended upon humane Actions, theſe would often fail them; the beſt Men being ſubject to ſo much frailty and ſin.

4. Tho' God of his Mercy doth accept of the imperfect Services of the Righteous, forgiving upon their habitual Repentance the Sins and Frailties which are mix'd with the beſt Actions; and pardoning the worſt Actions likewiſe after a particular Repentance and Amendment of Life: yet theſe ſtand upon record for the glory of God's Grace in their Repentance and Forgiveneſs, and for a memorial and warning to future Ages; that Men may neither preſume upon their own Righteouſneſs, nor deſpair of God's Mercy. But becauſe they are pardon'd, they are not always cenſur'd. God expreſſes his Promiſe of Pardon to the Wicked, upon their Repentance, by ſaying, that none of their Sins ſhould be *mentioned* unto them, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 16. And I think the ill Actions of good Men are ſeldom or never mention'd with a mark of God's diſpleaſure, unleſs the Series of the Hiſtory require it; and then the Reproof is mention'd, which paſs'd at the time of the commiſſion of them; as in the caſe of *David*, of *Hezekiah*, and St. *Peter*. But where no ſuch Cenſure was paſs'd at the time of the Action, the Action it ſelf is barely related, and nothing farther ſaid of it; becauſe the Crime being forgiven, God forbears to ſhew any farther diſpleaſure againſt it; ſuch is his Mercy to Repenting Sinners. And there could be no neceſſity, as I have obſerv'd, for any Cenſure upon the account of others, who may know by the plain Rule of God's Word what Actions are ſinful, tho' they are not always ſtyl'd ſo in relating the commiſſion of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of Abraham's *offering up his Son* Iſaac; *of* Jephtha's *Vow*; *and of the Divine Vengeance executed by the People of* Iſrael *upon Heathen Nations.*

HAving [a] alledged the humane Sacrifices, enjoined by the Heathen Religions, as a principal Argument of their being falſe; beſides what has been there ſaid, I ſhall in this place, more at large, remove whatever Objection of the like nature may be made againſt the true Religion; by ſhewing, that neither the Example of *Abraham*, nor that of *Jephtha*, authoriſes or countenances humane Sacrifices. And then I ſhall conſider the Reaſons for the Divine Vengeance executed upon Heathen Nations at God's Command.

As to the caſe of *Abraham*, it is evident, that God ſufficiently declared, how much he diſapproved of ſuch Sacrifices, when, as ſoon as *Abraham* had given that ſignal Teſtimony of his Faith, in ſo hard a tryal of it, an Angel from Heaven called to him, to ſtop his hand; and a Miracle was wrought, to ſubſtitute another Sacrifice in the ſtead of his Son.

And, whereas the Heathens believed their Gods to take delight in humane Sacrifices, and for that reaſon to require innocent Blood to be ſhed in their Worſhip, as the moſt acceptable part of it; and upon this Principle, and Perſuaſion, gave their Children to be ſacrificed, in order to appeaſe the Wrath, and ſatiate the Cruelty of their Gods: *Abraham* knew, that he ſerved the God of Mercy and Loving-kindneſs, and that he was, at this very time, in his higheſt Favour and Love. He too well underſtood the Divine

[a] Book I. p. 339.

Attributes,

Attributes; to believe that God could delight in humane Blood, that ſuch a Sacrifice could be acceptable to him, or that he could take any pleaſure in making a Father the Executioner of his only Son. *Abraham* had a late experience of the Goodneſs of God, when he intereceded for *Sodom*, and was permitted to argue from the Divine Juſtice in that caſe. But *Abraham* had likewiſe a full knowledge of the whole Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, he *ſaw the Day of Chriſt, and was glad*, John viii. 56. St. *Paul* aſſures us, that *the Goſpel was preached unto Abraham*, Gal. iii. 8. inaſmuch as the Promiſe was made to him, that *in him ſhould all Nations be bleſſed*. He knew, that the Meſſias was to be born, and ſuffer; he knew, that all Sacrifices were Types of the Sacrifice of Chriſt; he knew, that the Birth of his Son *Iſaac* was a Type of Chriſt's Birth, and now ſuppoſed, that God called him to be made a Type of his Death, and firmly believed, that he ſhould receive him again from the Dead, as a Type of his Reſurrection. *By Faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac; and he that had received the Promiſes, offered up his only begotten Son, of whom it was ſaid, that in Iſaac ſhall thy Seed be called: accounting, that God was able to raiſe him up even from the Dead, from whence alſo he received him in a Figure*, Heb. xi. 17.

Abraham acted in this caſe, not out of a Principle of Dread and Horror, but of Love; not with any hope or purpoſe of appeaſing the Wrath of God, but with a full aſſurance of his Favour, and dependence upon his Mercy and Goodneſs. He knew, God was able to reſtore his Son alive to him, after Death; he had it revealed to him, that God would raiſe Chriſt from the Dead; and concluded, that this his Son was to typifie and prefigure the Son of God, both in his Death and in his Reſurrection. For in order to accompliſh the many Promiſes and great Bleſſings entail'd upon *Iſaac*, he aſſured himſelf, that God would

moſt certainly bring him to Life again. And in this Faith and Confidence, he made no ſcruple or difficulty to take away that Life at God's command, which God had at firſt by Promiſe and Miracle beſtowed, and he truſted would as certainly reſtore, after he had been ſlain, at the expreſs Command, and by the gracious Deſign of the faithful Creator, and the ſole Author of Life and Death.

II. *Jephtha*'s was a raſh Vow, and he performed it upon his Daughter; but after what manner, is not certainly known: only this is concluded by the *Jews* as well as *Chriſtians*, that if he did ſacrifice her, he ſinned in doing it.

If *Jephtha* did perform his Vow by ſacrificing his Daughter, he acted [b] contrary to the Law of *Moſes*, which allowed of no ſuch Sacrifice; and did it after the Example of the *Heathens*, among whom he lived. For the Children of *Iſrael* were then polluted with Idolatry in ſerving ſtrange Gods; and, among others, they worſhipped *the Gods of the Children of Ammon*, (Judg. x. 6.) And *Molech* was one of the Abominations of the *Ammonites*, (1 Kings xi 7.) to whom Children were offered: which Worſhip was expreſly forbidden by the Law, (*Levit.* xviii. 21. xx. 2.) yet, after *Jephtha*'s time, the Children of *Iſrael* were guilty of this abominable Wickedneſs, (2 *Kings* xxiii. 10. *Jer.* vii. 31. xxxii. 35.) And *Jephtha* was now going to fight againſt the *Ammonites*; and, thro' groſs ignorance of the Law, and a ſuperſtitious emulation of the Enemy, he might hope to proſper in his Enterprize, by vowing as valuable a Sacrifice to the *Lord*, as the *Ammonites* were wont, upon a Victory obtain'd, to offer to their falſe God. If this be the caſe, we muſt conclude with the [c] *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, and

[b] Θύσας ἢ παῖδα ὁλοκαύτωσεν, ἅτε νόμιμον, ἅτε τῷ θεῷ μὴ χαρισμένην θυσίαν ἐπιζητῶν. Joſeph. Antiq. l. 5. c. 9.

[c] Ut non aſcendere faceret vir filium ſuum, vel filiam ſuam

and thoſe *Rabbins*, who are of opinion, that *Jephtha* did ſacrifice his Daughter; that the Anniverſary Lamentation was appointed to deplore that great Sin, and to prevent ſuch Crimes for the future.

But it has by others been ſuppoſed, that ſhe was not put to Death, but was obliged to live in a ſtate of Virginity and Solitude. *And Jephtha vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and ſaid, If thou ſhalt, without fail, deliver the Children of Ammon into mine hands, then it ſhall be, that whatſoever cometh forth out of the doors of my houſe to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, ſhall ſurely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering*, Judges xi. 30, 31. Here it is to be obſerved, that the word tranſlated *Door*, ſignifies alſo a *Gate*; and that *Houſe* is not to be taken ſtrictly, but in a ſenſe including the Precincts, or Places adjoining; as the Temple, and the Courts belonging to it, are included in the denomination of the *Houſe* of God; and thoſe, who ſold and bought in the *Court of the Gentiles*, are ſaid to have done it in the Temple, and to have made *the Houſe of Prayer a Den of Thieves*, Matth. xxi. 13. Therefore, by *whatſoever cometh forth out of the doors of my Houſe to meet me*, we are to underſtand, whatſoever coming out of *Jephtha*'s Gate, from any place adjoining to his Houſe, [d] ſhould happen to meet him in his return: which, if it had been a Beaſt, unleſs it had been a clean Beaſt, could not have been ſacrificed.

He *did with her according to his Vow, which he had vowed*; but no Vow was to be performed againſt the Law; and it was contrary to the Law to offer up any thing in ſacrifice, but what the Law allowed, and had preſcribed. His Vow was, that whatever came forth from his Houſe, and met him in his return from his

in holocauſtum ſicut fecit Jephthahh Gilghadæus, & non conſuluit Pinhhas ſacerdotem: & ſi conſuluiſſet Pinhhas ſacerdotem, redemiſſet eam pecuniis. Chal. Paraph. Jud. xi. 39.

[d] Occurrerit revertenti. Verſ. vulg.

Victory over the *Ammonites*, *ſhould ſurely be the Lord's*, or *he would offer it up for a burnt-offering*, (ver. 31.) So our Tranſlators render it in the Margin; and it is well known, that *Vau*, which they tranſlate *and* in the Text, often ſignifies *or*. Whatever met him, ſhould ſurely be the Lord's, tho' it proved to be ſuch as was not to be ſacrificed; according to the eſtimation or price of Redemption, appointed, (*Lev.* xxvii. 3.) or, if it were a Beaſt, and fit to be ſacrificed, it was not to be altered or changed, as the Law had ordained, (*ver.* 9, 10.) We read indeed, (*ver.* 29.) *None devoted, which ſhall be devoted of Men, ſhall be redeemed, but ſhall ſurely be put to Death.* But to be *devoted* there, is to be accurſed, and appointed to be ſlain, in a hoſtile manner, not with any Rites of Sacrifice, or Ceremonies of Religion, (*Joſ.* vi. 17.) Whereas *Jephtha* vowed a Burnt-offering, as a Thankſgiving, if he had the deſired ſucceſs. The *Canaanites* and the *Amalekites* were devoted to deſtruction, but the Vow of *Jephtha* was of another nature. And whereas we read, that *the Daughters of Iſrael went yearly to lament the Daughter of Jephtha, the Gileadite, four days in a Year*, (Judg. xi. 40.) It is tranſlated in the Margin, that they went *to talk* or converſe with her four days in a Year; and the *Hebrew* word there uſed, is rendred to *rehearſe* or *ſpeak*, (Judg. v. 11.) From whence it has been ſuppoſed, that ſhe was not put to Death, but was obliged to live in a ſtate of Virginity and Solitude. If there be no Example among the *Jews*, of a Daughter thus devoted to a ſtate of perpetual Virginity; it is alſo without Example among them, that any Father ſhould make ſuch a Vow as *Jephtha*'s Vow; it was raſh and unwarrantable, as well in the performance, as in the making; and he might follow the Heathen Cuſtoms in both. From all which we may conclude, that the Daughter of *Jephtha* ought not to have been ſacrificed, and moſt probably that ſhe was not.

not. At leaſt, no [e] Commentator has ever determined it to be conſonant to the Law, that he ſhould offer ſuch a Sacrifice, but all agree that it was directly contrary to it. So far was this Action of *Jephthá*, or that of *Abraham*, from the caſe and nature of humane Sacrifices among the *Heathens*.

III. Mercy and Charity were the Duties of the Old Teſtament, as they are of the New. But God was then pleaſed to command and enable his choſen People to execute his Vengeance upon ſuch as had filled up the meaſure of their Iniquities, to ſtrike an awe and terror into ſinful Nations: For he is the Author and Giver of Life, and the Governor and Judge of the World, of infinite Power and Authority to denounce Death upon heinous Offenders: and he may take away the Lives of Men by what means and in what manner he pleaſes, and might, with the greateſt Juſtice, make the *Iſraelites* the Executioners of his Wrath, eſpecially when this was the moſt proper method to raiſe in them an abhorrence of that Idolatry, for which they were commanded to deſtroy others; and when, among thoſe barbarous People, the Power of God could in no other way be ſo much magnified. Famine, and Peſtilence, and ſudden Death, might have been imputed to natural Cauſes, or have been thought Judgments inflicted by their own Gods. But when Warlike and Victorious Nations were deſtroyed by a People, whom they had deſpiſed, and who being encompaſſed by Enemies on every ſide, vanquiſhed them in the Name of the *Lord of Hoſts, the God of the Armies of Iſrael*, whom they defied: when this People were always Victorious for the puniſhment of the Sins of others, but when they ſuffered for their own Sins; this ſtruck a mighty Dread into all the neighbouring Nations, with a reverence of the true God, and a hatred of their Idols, in which they had put

[e] Vid. Seld. de Jur. Nat. & Gent. l. 4. c. 11.

their truſt, but by experience found, that they could not ſave in the Day of Battel. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Becauſe the Syrians have ſaid, the Lord is God of the Hills, but he is not God of the Vallies: therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord,* (1 Kings xx. 28.) And when *Rabſhakeh*, in the Name of the King of *Aſſyria*, had uttered this Blaſphemy againſt the Almighty, *Who are they among all the Gods of the Countries, that have delivered their Country out of mine hand? that the Lord ſhould deliver Jeruſalem out of mine hand?* (2 Kings xviii. 35.) Then God was pleaſed to declare, that he would defend the City for *his own ſake*, and for the honour of his Name, after ſo high provocation; and he ſlew, by his Angel, an hundred fourſcore and five thouſand of the *Aſſyrians* in one Night. As this was then done by the Miniſtry of an Angel; ſo God was commonly pleaſed to employ the *Armies of Iſrael* for the puniſhment of wicked Kingdoms. And with what Juſtice and happy Effect the Divine Judgments were thus executed, has been [f]elſewhere ſhewn.

Thoſe mighty Conquerors and Deliverers, under the Law, were Types of Chriſt; and their Example is applicable to us only in the Typical and Chriſtian ſenſe: that is, we muſt ſhew as much Reſolution againſt our ſpiritual Enemies, as they were empowered to uſe againſt thoſe of their temporal Welfare: we muſt be as diligent in advancing the Kingdom of Chriſt, and adorning his Goſpel, by Works of Righteouſneſs, by Sufferings, and Perſecutions for Righteouſneſs ſake, as they were to ſecure and advance the temporal Glory and Greatneſs of the *Jewiſh* ſtate. The *Chriſtian* Victories are thoſe of Faith; and *the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but ſpiritual. The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through Sufferings*, (Heb. ii. 10.) and we, as his Followers in

[f] Book 1. p. 67, &c.

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the ſame Warfare, have the ſame Enemies, and muſt ſubdue them by the ſame means. This is the Uſe, which S. *Paul* teaches us to make of the Examples of *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and *Sampſon*, and *Jephtha*, and of all ſuch as *through Faith ſubdued Nations, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to Flight the Armies of the Aliens*; that from theſe, as well as from ſuffering Examples, we ſhould learn to *run with patience the Race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God*, (Heb. xi. 32, 33, 34. xii. 1, 2.) The Divine Diſpenſations are, with infinite Wiſdom, variouſly adapted to the ſtate and condition of Mankind in the ſeveral Nations and Ages of the World; but the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God are ever the ſame.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Imprecations in the Pſalms, *and other Books of the Old Teſtament.*

ONE of the greateſt Excellencies of the Chriſtian Religion, is the Univerſal Charity which it enjoins; and we ſhall find that Charity was likewiſe the Doctrine of the Old Teſtament, and that there is nothing in the Book of *Pſalms*, or any other part of the Old Teſtament, contrary to this Doctrine; which will appear, if we conſider the peculiar Reaſons for thoſe Expreſſions, which may ſeem to imply any thing contrary to it.

I. Many of thoſe Expreſſions are uſed in reference to the Nations, upon whom after ſignal Acts of Mercy and Forbearance on his part, and repeated Provocations on theirs, God had commanded the *Iſraelites*

to execute his Judgments; and the Sins of the People of *Iſrael* were the Cauſe that this was not accompliſh'd: and therefore it was lawful for them to pray that they might have grace to repent, and that their Sins might be no hindrance to them in the fulfilling his Will; but that God would enable them *to execute vengeance upon the Heathen*, Pſal. cxlix. 7. And it was lawful likewiſe to pray againſt all the other Enemies of God, that he would abate their Pride, and make them *to know themſelves to be but Men*, Pſal. ix. 20. lxxiv. 22, 23. cxxxix. 21, 22.

II. *David* being King, had the Sword of Juſtice committed to him, he was *the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that did evil*; and therefore when his rebellious Subjects were too ſtrong for him, as in the Rebellion of *Abſalom*, he might make his Appeal to God, and beſeech him to take the matter into his own hand. If he might puniſh his Subjects, he might pray to God that he would enable him to do it. And in Foreign Wars, if he might kill his Enemies, he might pray for Victory and Succeſs over them.

III. It is lawful to pray that publick and notorious Malefactors may be puniſh'd, for it is lawful to diſcover them, and bring them to Puniſhment; and it muſt needs be lawful to pray that that may be done, which it is lawful for us to do. It is lawful to ſeek Redreſs of private Injuries, and therefore it is lawful to pray, that they may be redreſs'd; for we may pray for Succeſs upon any honeſt Undertaking. If this be done out of a Love to Juſtice, and a neceſſary care of our own Preſervation; not out of Malice, and a Thirſt after Revenge, but with the moſt favourable Conſtruction that the worſt Actions are capable of, and with hearty Prayers to God for his Bleſſing upon the Offender; in giving him the Grace of Repentance, and granting him whatſoever Happineſs in this World may be conſiſtent with the Honour of God, and Juſtice

ſtice towards other Men, and the Salvation of his own Soul.

IV. God was the peculiar Law-giver, and Political Governor of the *Jews*; and Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments were the Sanction of the Laws which he had given them. For the *Moſaical* Law is called *the Miniſtration of Death*, and *the Miniſtration of Condemnation*, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. becauſe the Promiſes of the Law, as *ſuch*, belong'd only to this Life, and a Curſe was denounc'd againſt *every one, that continued not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10, 11. God had expreſly threatned to inflict Puniſhment in this Life, for the Tranſgreſſion of thoſe Laws; and therefore to pray to God that his Judgments might overtake Evil-doers, was no more than it is in other Governments, to proſecute Offenders before the Magiſtrate; they appeal'd to God to put his Laws in force againſt them, and not to ſuffer the wicked to go unpuniſh'd in contempt of thoſe Laws, which he had appointed, and under that Diſpenſation which was eſtabliſh'd upon Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments. They were not allow'd to indulge their Anger and Deſire of Revenge, yet they might pray that God would avenge himſelf of his Enemies, and reſcue his Laws from that Contempt which they muſt lie under from wicked Men, if they did not feel thoſe Puniſhments which the Laws of God threatned them withal.

But under the Goſpel the Caſe is different; for now we are not to expect that Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments ſhould conſtantly follow upon the Performance or Tranſgreſſion of our Duty; but both of them may be commonly reſerv'd to a future State. A Chriſtian may not pray for Judgments upon his Enemies, becauſe God has not ſo peremptorily declar'd by the Goſpel, that he will inflict his Puniſhments in this Life, as he had done by the Law, and we have our Saviour's Command and Example to pray for their Repen-

Repentance, that they be not puniſh'd in the next. But a Chriſtian may right himſelf in due courſe of Law; and, in order to that, may petition the Judge, without any breach of Charity; and this was all that the *Jews* did, when they pray'd God to execute his own Laws, by inflicting ſuch Puniſhments as he had threathed to inflict upon the Tranſgreſſors of them in this Life: they invoked and appeal'd to God as their Political Judge and Sovereign, and pray'd Judgment againſt Offenders.

V. Thoſe which ſeem Imprecations, are oftentimes Predictions or Denunciations of Judgments to come upon Sinners; as we may learn from *Acts* i. 20. And it can be no Uncharitableneſs to foretel or denounce God's Judgments againſt Sinners, but rather an effect of Charity towards them for their Repentance and Amendment.

Moſt of thoſe places of Scripture may as properly be render'd by way of Prediction in the Future Tenſe; and when they cannot, they may be look'd upon as Denunciations of God's Wrath. For Prophets were ſometimes employ'd to execute the Divine Judgments, as we ſee in *Elijah*, 2 Kings i. 9, 10. and as they ſometimes executed God's Judgments, ſo they at other times denounced them; and this had nothing of Uncharitableneſs in it, but is fully agreeable with the Goſpel it ſelf. For thus we read that *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were puniſhed with preſent Death by St. *Peter*, Acts v. But if St. *Peter* had denounced Death, without inflicting it immediately upon them, this had been leſs. And St. *Paul* prays that the *Lord would reward Alexander the Copper-Smith according to his works*, who had *done him much evil*, 2 Tim. iv. 14. which was no uncharitable Imprecation, but a leaving him to God's Judgment, and a Denunciation of Puniſhment to befal him without Repentance; it was an Authoritative Act, and in conſequence of that Excommunication which the Apoſtle had inflicted upon him,

1 *Tim.*

1 *Tim.* i. 20. And when God had inſpir'd and empower'd Men to denounce Judgments, this was no more againſt Charity, than the inflicting of them would have been, or than Excommunication it ſelf is. If Magiſtrates are empower'd in the King's Name to give Sentence, and to inflict Puniſhments, certainly Men may be ſo empower'd and authoriz'd by God himſelf, and may act or ſpeak accordingly, without breach of Charity.

VI. The Expreſſions *Pſal.* lxix. and cix. are to be underſtood concerning *Judas*, as we find them apply'd *Acts* i. and all other Expreſſions of the ſame Nature may be underſtood either of him, or of ſome others like him, whom the *Pſalmiſt* by Inſpiration might know to be hardned in Sin, paſt Repentance, and therefore might pray that God would rather cut them off, than ſuffer them to do more miſchief in this World, and increaſe the number of their Iniquities here, and of their Miſeries in the World to come.

VII. Laſtly, This Suppoſition is tacitly imply'd in Imprecations, *if they will perſiſt in their Sins, if they will not repent*; and the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures might in ſome Caſes know by Revelation, that Judgments were the only means to reclaim thoſe Men againſt whom they pray'd, and then it was the greateſt Charity to pray that God would be pleas'd to make uſe of that Remedy, which alone was left for their Amendment; as *Pſal.* lxxxiii. 15, 16. *So perſecute them with thy tempeſt, and make them afraid with thy ſtorm. Fill their faces with ſhame: that they may ſeek thy Name, O Lord.*

There is nothing therefore inconſiſtent with the Doctrine of Charity, and the Love of our Neighbour in thoſe places of Scripture, which have been liable to the Miſtakes of unwary Men. For either they are Prayers to God to enable the *Iſraelites* to do what he had appointed, as in the Deſtruction of the *Canaanites*, whom God was pleas'd for wiſe and great Reaſons to puniſh

puniſh by the Sword of the Children of *Iſrael*, rather than by Peſtilence, or any other Judgment. Or they are Prayers to God to aſſiſt them in the doing what both Juſtice and Charity will allow to be done, either by Perſons in Authority, as King *David*, or even by private Men; as in the proſecution of Offenders, and bringing them to condign puniſhment; and this may be without any degree of Malice, or the leaſt breach of Charity; ſince Puniſhment it ſelf may be not only an Act of Juſtice, but of Charity likewiſe towards divers Men. Or theſe Expreſſions may be Appeals to God, as the Political Governor and Legiſlator of the *Jews*: Or they are Predictions or Denunciations of God's Wrath againſt Sinners. And they may be directed againſt impenitent obſtinate Men, hardned in their Wickedneſs. Or, laſtly, they may be only Prayers to God, that he would inflict ſuch Puniſhments upon Men, as may bring them to Repentance.

And tho' the *Jews*, in latter Ages, perverted ſome paſſages of their Law, to ſerve their own Pride and Revenge; yet, as it is evident by many inſtances, never any Law but that of Chriſt, oblig'd Men to more Humanity towards Strangers, or more Charity towards Enemies. They were certainly to *bear falſe witneſs* againſt no Man, and to covet no Man's Houſe or Wife; and therefore the word *Neighbour* is not to be limited, to ſignifie only an *Iſraelite* or a Proſelyte, but is to be underſtood of any Man whatſoever, *Exod.* xx. 16, 17. *Thou ſhalt love him* (the Stranger) *as thy ſelf*, Lev. xix. 34. The *Ægyptians* are ſtiled the Neighbours of the *Iſraelites*, Exod. xi. 2. And *Pſal.* xv. 2, 3. where Acts of common Juſtice towards Neighbours are ſpoken of; by *Neighbour* muſt neceſſarily be underſtood any Perſon, for to all Men Juſtice is due. Not only Juſtice, but Charity was enjoin'd towards Enemies. *If thine Enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirſty, give him*

him water to drink; for thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord ſhall reward thee, Prov. xxv. 21, 22. which words ſo fully expreſs our Duty of Chriſtian Charity, that St. *Paul* could find none fitter to deſcribe it by, *Rom.* xii. 20. And, *Exod.* xxiii. 4, 5. *If thou meet thine enemies Ox, or his Aſs, going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again. If thou ſee the Aſs of him that hateth thee lying under his burthen, and wouldſt forbear to help him, thou ſhalt ſurely help with him.* And in divers other places of the Old Teſtament, Charity towards Enemies is highly recommended, and earneſtly inculcated, *Job* xxxi. 29. *Prov.* xx. 22. xxiv. 29. *Malach.* ii. 10. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, we read, *Lev.* xix. 18. but *thou ſhalt hate thine Enemy*, is no where to be found in the Old Teſtament; and therefore, *Matth.* v. 43. it is to be taken as a falſe gloſs of the Interpreters of the Law, which our Saviour rejects; unleſs it be to be meant, as *Grotius* underſtands it, of that enmity which the *Jews* were to ſhew in all Acts of Hoſtility towards the ſeven Nations of *Canaan*, and the *Amalekites*, Exod. xvii. 16. xxxiv. 11. *Deut.* vii. 1. xxv. 19. Yet theſe very Nations were not utterly excluded from becoming Proſelytes: And to me it ſeems very remarkable, that tho' the Children of *Iſrael* had receiv'd ſuch hard and cruel uſage in *Ægypt*, which is ſo often mention'd in the Law of *Moſes*, they were, nevertheleſs, by the ſame Law commanded not to abhor an *Ægyptian*, but to admit the Children of *Ægyptian* Parents into the Congregation of the Lord in the third Generation. *Thou ſhalt not abhor an Ægyptian, becauſe thou waſt a ſtranger in his Land*, Deut. xxiii. 7. Thou ſhalt not abhor him, that is, thou ſhalt not revenge upon him the Injuries done thee, but ſhalt ſhew him Kindneſs; the leaſt effect whereof, was to relieve him in time of diſtreſs; which [a] Charity, the *Jews* ever held themſelves oblig'd to

[a] Lightf. *Hebr.* & Talmud. *Exercit. on* Matth. vi. 2.

extend

extend to the *Gentiles*; and there is reaſon to ſuſpect, that they have been wrong'd in the reports of their Uncharitableneſs to all of other Nations; but any thing is eaſily believ'd of a hated and deſpiſed People. And I am not to vindicate their Practice, but their Law. [b] *Philo Judæus* has an excellent Treatiſe, in which he diſcourſeth at large upon this Subject, and ſhews to how great Humanity and Charity the *Jews* were oblig'd by the Law of *Moſes*. [c] *Joſephus* maintains, that they were obliged to ſupply the *Heathen* with all things neceſſary for their ſupport, with Fire, and Water, and Food; to ſhew them the way, and not to let their Dead lie unburied: Which is a direct, and doubtleſs a deſigned confutation of thoſe Calumnies of Inhumanity, which, in his time, were charged upon the *Jews*, taken perhaps from the Practice of the Phariſees and Zealots. For the latter *Jews* differed in theſe Points; [d] *Leo* of *Modena* affirms, that the *Rabbins* expreſly teach, that Charity ought indifferently to be extended to all Mankind, to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*. And nothing can be more full and expreſs than the *Jewiſh* [e] Catechiſm is, that all Juſtice and Civility ought to be uſed towards *Heathens*. But [f] *Maimonides* lays this down for a rule, that they ought not to relieve the *Gentiles* in want, upon any account of obligation by the Law, but only for the ſake of Peace with thoſe among whom they li-

[b] Philo Jud. περὶ φιλανθρωπίας. [c] Contr. Ap. l. 2.

[d] Leo Moden. Part. 1. c. 14. §. 9.

[e] Erat majoribus noſtris in ore ſemper hæc aurea ſententia; Quiſque conſueſcat —— Multo pacis ac concordiæ ſtudio conciliare ſibi fratres, propinquos, cunctos homines, etiam alienigenam, communione fori conjunctum, huic honorem habere, ſalutem impertire prior, tam æquum & fidum eſſe quam conſanguineis ſuis ſatu Iſraelitarum editis. Etenim multò gravius eſt ſcelus ethnico, quam Judæo quid per vim eripere. Nimirum ille propter injuriam ſibi factam, Dei numen profanum, deſpicatum, habet, &c. Abrah. Jagel. Catech. Judæ. p. 50.

[f] De Idololatr. c. 10. §. 1. c. 26. §. 6.

ved;

ved; and that if they ſee any of them in the laſt extremity, they may not preſerve them from periſhing. But no true judgment can be made of any Religion from the Practice or Principles of ſome of its Profeſſors, nor of any Nation from the ill Temper or falſe Notions of any Sects or Factions.

CHAP. XX.

Of the Texts of the Old Teſtament cited in the New.

THO' the Apoſtles having prov'd their Divine Commiſſion by ſo many and ſo undeniable Miracles, had an infallible Authority to interpret and apply the Texts of the Old Teſtament in confirmation of the Goſpel; yet it is not to be doubted, but that the Citations, which ſeem to have moſt difficulty in them, are ſuch as that the *Jews* of that time, againſt whom they were urged, could not but acknowledge that the Apoſtles gave the true Expoſition of them, tho' they deny'd that they were truly apply'd to our Saviour, and his Goſpel. For unleſs the Apoſtles had either made out their Citations from the Old Teſtament by Maxims and Principles then known and receiv'd among the *Jews*, or had alledg'd them in ſuch a ſenſe, as was then generally acknowledg'd, it had been to no purpoſe to alledge them at all againſt them.

It is known likewiſe, and obſervable upon this occaſion, that after the Captivity in *Babylon*, tho' the Bible was read in the Synagogues in the Original *Hebrew*, yet it was alſo interpreted into the vulgar Language, and the Interpreter did not always tranſlate the Text *verbatim*, but often gave the ſenſe of it in different words, and with ſome latitude, to render it the

the more intelligible. This way of Interpretation was at length improv'd into a *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, containing with the Text a ſhort Explication of it according to the ſenſe of the moſt Learned among the *Jews*, tho' there muſt be ſuppoſed to have been many Notions current among them, which would not be brought within the compaſs of that Expoſition. The Writers therefore of the New Teſtament, might ſometimes give ſuch an Interpretation of the Texts of the Old Teſtament, as was as well, or better known among them for whom they wrote, than the *Greek* or *Hebrew* Text was; or they might take upon themſelves the liberty of Interpreters, the better to explain the Texts alledged, and enforce their Arguments.

Thus, for inſtance, St. *Stephen*, Acts vii. would never have produc'd any thing out of the Old Teſtament before the *Sanhedrim*; nor would St. *Luke* have recorded it ſoon after, if it had been capable of any diſproof or confutation, whatever difficulties at this diſtance of time there may appear to us to be in it. And ſo in all other caſes, we may depend upon it, that the Apoſtles and other Diſciples, who had ſuch demonſtrative Evidence for the conviction of Unbelievers, by a conſtant power of Miracles, would never make uſe of any Arguments to the *Jews* from the Old Teſtament, but ſuch as they well knew, their Adverſaries could never be able to diſprove or deny. For there were then certain methods of Interpretation, as we learn from [a] *Joſephus*, which are now loſt, and they diſputed from acknowledg'd Maxims and Rules: the only difference and matter of diſpute, was in the application of them to their particular caſe; however our ignorance of things, then generally known, may now make it difficult to reconcile ſome Texts of the New Teſtament with thoſe of the Old, from

[a] Joſeph. Bell. Judaic. lib. iii. c. 14.

whence

whence they were cited. The late [b] publiſher of the *Miſna* obſerves this to have been the genuine and proper method of the *Jews* in their Citations, not to produce the Texts, as they lie in the Bible, but ſometimes to uſe different Expreſſions, and ſometimes to change the order of the words. And [c] that this was ever the conſtant cuſtom of Prophets, (and ſuch the Apoſtles were) to deliver the ſenſe, and not the very words of Scripture, is a received Doctrine among the *Rabbins*; by which, one of them vindicates *Moſes*, in the variation which he makes in repeating the Ten Commandments, (*Deut.* v. 12.) from the words ſpoken by God himſelf, (*Exod.* xx. 8.)

[d] F. *Simon*, in his Critical Hiſtory, has a remarkable Paſſage upon this Subject: "The Book, ſays "he, where the moſt of that ſort of Citations are "found, is the Epiſtle of St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews*, "where we find nothing elſe but Paſſages of the Old "Teſtament explain'd in a manner that is altogether "Allegorical, and foreign to the Letter; which has "alſo given an occaſion to ſome Writers to ſuſpect, "that St. *Paul* was not the Author. But it ſeems on "the contrary, that if we reflect upon the *Phariſees* "Method in their expounding Scripture, it cannot "be attributed to any other than to that holy Apo-"ſtle, who having ſtudied in *Jeruſalem* under the "Doctor *Gamaliel*, did penetrate into all the moſt re-"fined Points of their ſecret and myſtical Interpre-"tations of the Bible. And indeed, after I had re-"commended the reading of this Epiſtle to a *Jew*, "who was well read in his own ancient Authors, he "having peruſed it, freely declar'd, that it muſt

[b] Guil. Surenhuſius. Præf. in Miſn. Part. 1.

[c] Moſes pro *mementote* dixit *ſervate*, ad ſolum ſenſum attendens, uſitato Prophetis more, qui ſemper mentem Scripturæ, non autem verba conſiderant. Menaſſ. Ben. Iſr. Conciliat. in Exod. Qu. 36. §. 1.

[d] Sim. *Crit. Hiſt. of the N. Teſt.* Part 1. c. xxi.

" needs have been written by ſome great [a] *Mekubal*
" of his own Nation. And he was ſo far from tel-
" ling me that St. *Paul* had wreſted the true ſenſe of
" Scripture with his Allegories at pleaſure, that he
" extolled his profound skill in the ſublime ſenſe of
" the Bible, and always return'd to his great *Meku-*
" *bal*, of whom he never ſpake but with admira-
" tion.

Hoc in omnibus ſcripturis ſanctis obſervandum eſt Apoſtolos & Apoſtolicos viros in ponendis Teſtimoniis de veteri Teſtamento, non verba conſiderare, ſed ſenſum, nec eadem Sermonum calcare veſtigia, dummodò à ſententiis non recedant. Hieron. in Amos. c. v.

Ex quo perſpicuum eſt Apoſtolos & Evangeliſtas, & ipſum Dominum ſalvatorem —— ex Hebræo transferre quod legerint, non curantes de ſyllabis punctiſque verborum, dummodo ſententiarum veritas transferatur. Id. in Malach. c. iii.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God.

THIS is that Article of our Faith, which was *to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 23. and has ever been moſt liable to the Objections of Infidels: and therefore I ſhall take the more care to give the cleareſt and fulleſt account I can of it.

I. I ſhall here conſider the neceſſity of the Incarnation of the Son of God, for the ſatisfaction of the Juſtice, and the vindication of the Honour of God.

II. Tho' it ſhould be ſuppos'd, that God could have pardon'd the Sins of Men upon any other terms,

[a] *A Man of Tradition.*

than

than the Death and Satisfaction of his own Son in our Fleſh; I hope fully to prove, that this is ſo far from being unworthy of God, that no other way of our Reconciliation with him (as far as we are able to apprehend) could have been ſo becoming the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

I. There ſeems to have been a neceſſity for the Incarnation of the Son of God, for the ſatisfaction of God's Juſtice, and the vindication of his Honour. For God is Infinite Juſtice as well as Infinite Mercy; and Infinite Juſtice muſt puniſh Offenders, unleſs full ſatisfaction be made for the Offence; becauſe Infinite Juſtice muſt demand to the utmoſt extent of Juſtice, and muſt require whatſoever can in Juſtice be demanded. But Infinite Mercy found out a means to ſatisfie this Infinite Juſtice; which Satisfaction could be made only by the Obedience and by the Death of the Son of God, who by his *Obedience unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, vindicated the Honour of God, by performing in our Nature a perfect and abſolute Obedience to all that ever God required of Mankind, and by ſuffering to the utmoſt of all that the Sins of the whole World deſerv'd. It is for the Honour of God, that his Laws ſhould be exactly obſerv'd, and obſerv'd by one who is of that very Nature, for which they were ordain'd; and that Satisfaction ſhould be made in the ſame Nature for the Sins of it: Chriſt therefore taking our Nature upon him, paid down *the uttermoſt Farthing*; which, in ſtrictneſs of Juſtice, muſt have been demanded, but which could never have been paid by any created Being, for the Sins of the whole World: And he *fulfill'd all Righteouſneſs* in obedience to the Divine Laws, which otherwiſe could never have been fully obey'd. And as far as God's Juſtice and Honour was concern'd to ſee his Laws obey'd, and to demand ſatisfaction for the breach of them; ſo far the Incarnation of the Son of God

be necessary, because these things could be perform'd by no Creature.

II. Tho' it should be supposed that God could have pardon'd the Sins of Men upon other Terms than the Death and Satisfaction of his own Son in our Flesh, yet the Incarnation and Death of his Son is so far from implying any thing unworthy of God, that no other way of our Reconciliation with him (as far as we can apprehend) could so much have become the Divine Wisdom and Goodness.

First, There is nothing in this whole Dispensation unworthy of God. Here I am to consider that which was the great Prejudice taken against the Christian Religion at its first Propagation, and is still the great Objection of the Enemies of the Gospel of Christ, and of their own Salvation. They are apt to represent it to themselves as an unnecessary thing, and unworthy of God, that he should send his only begotten Son into the World for the Redemption of Mankind; they imagine that the Infinite Wisdom of God could have found out other Methods of Salvation for us, and that this would never have been made use of, if there could have been any other.

It might be enough in Answer to such Objections, to say with the Apostle; *nay, but, O Man, who art thou that replyest against God? Shall* the Person saved *say unto him that* saved him, *why hast thou* saved *me thus?* Will we not be contented to be saved, unless we can be fully certify'd in all the Reasons and Methods of our Salvation? May not God bring to pass our Redemption in such a way as he shall see fitting? or shall we question his Wisdom, if his Mercy be so much greater than we can comprehend? How infinite is his Mercy, and how monstrous our Ingratitude, if his Goodness be made an Objection against the Truth of his Word, and be alledg'd as an Argument for our Unbelief! *What if God willing to shew* the Heinousness of Sin, and *to make known the riches* of his Mer-

Mercy, choſe this way for the Redemption of the World? What if many Reaſons may be given why this Method was the moſt proper and expedient; and what if there might be infinitely greater and better Reaſons for it, than all the Wiſdom of Man can conceive?

But though the Reveal'd Will and Counſel of God ought to ſilence all Diſputes in this as well as in all other Caſes; yet I think this Objection is capable of a very plain and direct Anſwer. For whatever Weight there may ſeem to be in it, it is all grounded upon a Miſtake, and upon a wrong Notion of the Union between the Divine and the Humane Nature of Chriſt. For if the Godhead be not ſo united to the Manhood as to ſuffer with it, there is no imaginable Reaſon why its Union with the Manhood ſhould be ſuppoſed to be unworthy of God. I ſhall therefore

1. Shew the Unreaſonableneſs of this Suppoſition, that the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt ſhould cauſe the Godhead to ſuffer with the Manhood.

2. I will prove that the Humiliation of the Son of God, in aſſuming our Nature, may be accounted for, without ſuppoſing that the Godhead ſuffer'd.

3. That the Satisfaction of Chriſt by dying for our Sins may be explain'd without it.

1. The Unreaſonableneſs of this Suppoſition, that the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt ſhould cauſe the Godhead to ſuffer with the Manhood. This Objection ſuppoſes the Godhead to be ſo united to the Manhood in the Perſon of our Saviour, as that the Divine Nature muſt really and properly partake in all the Sufferings which befel his Perſon. It ſuppoſes, that Chriſt, as God, ſuffer'd the Miſeries of Humane Life, and at laſt underwent Death upon the Croſs; which is ſo far from being the Doctrine of the Goſpel, that it is no better than Hereſy and Blaſphemy, and has always been rejected

and condemn'd as ſuch by the Catholick Church. That the Union of the Godhead with the Manhood, ſhould render the Godhead capable of Sufferings, as the Soul by being united to the Body becomes ſenſible of its Pains, is indeed a thing not only unworthy of God, but impoſſible to conceive. The Immortal and ever-bleſſed God can be ſubject to nothing of Paſſion or Frailty. The Godhead is uncapable of any Imperfection, and therefore uncapable of receiving any Impreſſions of Sufferings from the Humane Nature, as the Soul doth from the Body of Man. So that tho' the Union between the Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt be fitly explain'd by that between the Soul and the Body in Man, yet the manner of acting is very different. For Finite Beings can mutually act and be acted upon by each other in their ſeveral Actions and Paſſions; but the Divine Nature of Chriſt being impaſſible, could ſuffer nothing by all that was inflicted on the Humane, but remain'd infinitely Happy and Glorious under all the Torments and Agonies endur'd by our Saviour both in his Soul and Body. The Son of God ſuffer'd, that is, the Perſon, who is the Son of God; but he ſuffer'd, not as Son of God, but as Man united Perſonally to the Godhead. The Properties, Actions, and Paſſions of both Natures belong to the Perſon conſiſting of both; who may be denominated from both, and receive different Denominations, ſome from one Nature, and ſome from the other. For whatever belongs to either Nature, is communicated to the Perſon conſiſting of both Natures, tho' the Properties, Actions or Paſſions of each Nature cannot be communicated from one of theſe Natures to the other. The Soul is immaterial and immortal; the Body is material and mortal: but Man conſiſting of Soul and Body, is immaterial and immortal in reſpect of his Soul, but material and mortal with reſpect to his Body. And Soul and Body ſtill retaining their different Properties diſtinct, the Man by Virtue of the Union

of

of Soul and Body, is denominated from both: Man is mortal and immortal; mortal as to his Body, but immortal as to his Soul. And Christ, who could not suffer in his Divine Nature, suffer'd in his Humane.

As God is pleas'd to aid and assist and support innocent and good Men in their Sufferings, and to direct and conduct them through the Course of their Lives: So God was not only present with the Humane Nature of Christ, but was so united to it, as to become one Person with it; which, since the Godhead could suffer nothing from it, is no more unworthy of God, than if he had only guided him with his Spirit, as he did the Prophets without any personal Union. There is no Inconvenience or Absurdity in believing that God should by the most intimate and personal Union become united to a Man, who did weep, and bleed, and die. For as God by this Union did not change the Nature he had assumed, or prevent the Sufferings of it, so he did not partake in them. No Man can deny, upon Principles of Philosophy, but that it is very reasonable to believe, that God may afford a more peculiar Presence to one Man than to another, and that this Man may yet be subject to Afflictions; and therefore the Son of God might become united to the Soul and Body of Christ in as intimate a manner, as the Soul and Body are united to each other in us; and yet this Union of the Divine Nature might not preserve the Humane from the Sufferings incident to the rest of Mankind, but must leave it to submit to them, tho' they were never so grievous, when this was the very End and Design of the Union.

It was not below the Majesty of God to be Personally united to a most Innocent, and Sinless and Holy Man, tho' he was a Suffering and Afflicted Man; and it is not the Personal Union, as some are apt to conceive, which could be any Diminution to God's Glory, but their own Error and Mistake, in what they surmise would be the Consequence of such an Union.

2. The Humiliation of the Son of God in aſſuming our Nature, may be accounted for, without ſuppoſing that the Godhead ſuffer'd. It was the greateſt Condeſcenſion and Humiliation in the Son of God to take upon him our Nature: For it is a gracious and merciful Condeſcenſion for him to take care of us by his Providence. *God humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are in Heaven and in the Earth*, Pſal. cxiii. 6. But ſometimes and in ſome places he is in a more peculiar manner preſent upon Earth, and that is an extraordinary Condeſcenſion; though he is always the ſame in himſelf, and never the leſs preſent or the leſs happy in Heaven. But it was the moſt wonderful Condeſcenſion in God to unite himſelf to our Humane Nature, and to become one Perſon with it, and ſo to die for us; tho' his Divine Nature did not and could not ſuffer, but only the Humane Nature to which it is united. He was *not aſhamed to call* Men *his Brethren*, and *in all things to be made like unto his Brethren*, Heb. ii. 11, 17. but vouchſafed to aſſume our Nature in its loweſt condition, and to be ſo ſtrictly and perſonally united to the moſt afflicted of all the Sons of Men, as to aſcribe all his Sufferings to himſelf, for the benefit of all Mankind.

It is the infinite Mercy of God, to vouchſafe us the Comfort of his Preſence in any way or meaſure: but it is the moſt aſtoniſhing and adorable Act of his Goodneſs, that he would be pleas'd ſo far to condeſcend, as to take our very Nature upon him, that he might be born, and might die for our ſakes. And that which magnifies his Mercy and Goodneſs in the higheſt meaſure, is certainly moſt worthy of the good and merciful God.

3. The Satisfaction of Chriſt by dying for our Sins, may be explain'd without ſuppoſing that the Godhead ſuffer'd. The Chriſtian Faith is, That *as the Reaſonable Soul and Fleſh is one Man, ſo God and Man is one Chriſt*; and that this Perſon conſiſting both of God and Man

Man united, ſuffer'd for our Salvation: But that all the Sufferings were inflicted on the Humane Nature, and terminated in it. God and Man became one Chriſt, *not by the Converſion of the Godhead into Fleſh, but by taking of the Manhood into God.* The Humane Nature was aſſum'd into the Perſonality of his Godhead, *not by Confuſion of Subſtance, but by Unity of Perſon.* The Divine Nature of Chriſt and his Humane Nature became one Perſon, and tho' theſe Two Natures remain as diſtinct as before the Union; yet all the Properties of a Perſon belong to both Natures united, and whatever was done or ſuffer'd by him, was attributed to the Perſon conſiſting of both Natures. And as in Man the Perſonality is derived from his Superior Nature to his Inferior, and the Body is taken into a Unity of Perſon with the Soul: ſo, much rather, when God was pleas'd to become united to Man; the *Perſonal Unity*, or that *Subſiſtence*, whereby they are but one Perſon, is with the like Subordination of the Humane to the Divine Nature, as that of the Body to the Soul in Man; that is, with all the Subordination, which can be conſiſtent with the Diſtinction of Natures, and the Preſervation of the free Exerciſe of the Faculties in the inferior Nature. This Subordination of the Humane to the Divine Nature in Chriſt, cauſes the Unity of his Perſon conſiſting of both Natures. For by a *Perſon*, in the uſual Signification of the word, as it is apply'd to Creatures, is meant a Rational Being of a ſeparate Exiſtence from all other Rational Beings: and therefore the Humane Nature of Chriſt, by its Union with his Divine Nature, having no ſeparate Exiſtence, has no Perſonality or Subſiſtence of its own, but in the Perſonality or Subſiſtence of his Divine Nature.

And Chriſt thus conſiſting of both Natures, ſuffer'd a proper and ſatisfactory Puniſhment for the Sins of all Mankind, by enduring in their ſtead, all that was required of them, according to the Sanction of the

the Divine Law. For by virtue of the Perſonal Union of his Divine with his Humane Nature, all Chriſt's Sufferings receiv'd an infinite Value and Merit, and became entituled and aſcrib'd to God himſelf, becauſe they were undergone by that Perſon, who is God as well as Man, though they were not undergone by him in his Divine, but only in his Humane Nature.

Thus God is ſaid to have *purchaſed his Church with his own Blood*, Acts xx. 28. For Actions and Paſſions in any Perſon are Perſonal, and are attributed to the whole Perſon; and ſometimes thoſe Actions and Paſſions, which can be perform'd in one of thoſe Natures only, which conſtitute a Perſon, are yet attributed to the other Nature, which is uncapable of them otherwiſe than by that Relation which reſults from the Union of both Natures; whereby all things that befal the Perſon, may be affirm'd of it as ſuch, and therefore have reſpect to both the Natures, of which it conſiſts, and may be apply'd to it, under the Denomination of either of them. *All the Souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were ſeventy Souls*, Exod. i. 5. *If a Soul touch any unclean thing*, Lev. v. 2. *And the Soul that eateth of it, ſhall bear his iniquity*, Lev. vii. 18, 20. In theſe, and many other places of Scripture, Actions and Paſſions peculiar to the Body, are, by reaſon of the Union of the Soul and Body, attributed to the Soul. Nay, both in the *Hebrew* and the *Greek* Text the Soul is ſometimes put for the Body, even of a dead Man, *Lev.* xxi. 11. xxii. 4. in which Senſe [a] Biſhop *Pearſon* explains *Acts* ii. 27. *Pſal.* xvi. 10. as [b] divers others had done before him.

And in other places the Body or Fleſh is often taken for the whole Man, and that is attributed to it, which the Fleſh is of it ſelf uncapable of. The Fleſh diſtinctly conſider'd, and apart from the Soul, can nei-

[a] *On the Creed*, Art. v. [b] *Archbiſhop* Uſher's *Anſwer to the Jeſuites Challenge*, p. 305.

ther

ther ſin, nor pray, nor underſtand, nor worſhip, nor partake of the Spirit, nor be juſtify'd; and yet all theſe things are aſcribed to the Fleſh, without any mention made of the Soul. *All Fleſh had corrupted his way upon the Earth*, Gen. vi. 12. *O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee ſhall all Fleſh come*, Pſal. lxv. 2. *And all Fleſh ſhall know, that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob*, Iſai. xlix. 26. *All Fleſh ſhall come to worſhip before me, ſaith the Lord*, Iſai. lxvi. 23. *And all Fleſh ſhall ſee the Salvation of God*, Luke iii. 6. *I will pour out of my Spirit upon all Fleſh*, Acts ii. 17. Joel ii. 28. *By the works of the Law ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified*, Gal. ii. 16. And we ſay in our own Language, *any Body thinks*; or *any Body underſtands*; tho' we all know, it is the Soul, and not the Body, which thinks, and underſtands. It is very uſual in other Books, and very agreeable to the Style of Scripture, and to the common Speech and Senſe of Men, for thoſe Actions or Paſſions of a Perſon to be attributed to him, under the Denomination of one of the united Natures, which could be perform'd only in the other. And the Union between the Godhead and the Manhood being like that which is between the Soul and the Body, the Son of God is ſaid to have *ſuffered*, and the Son of Man to have *come down from Heaven*; not that the Godhead ſuffered, or that the Humane Nature of Chriſt was in Heaven before his Incarnation, but according to the uſual Style of Scripture, the Union between the Divine and Humane Natures entitles the Perſon conſiſting of them both, under the Denomination of either Nature, to that which was done in the other, tho' as the Humane Nature did not partake of the Perfections of the Divine; ſo neither did the Divine Nature partake of the Sufferings of the Humane. But both Natures being perſonally united, the Perſon is ſometimes denoted by one, and ſometimes by the other Nature.

All

All the Objections againſt the Incarnation of the Son of God proceed upon the like Miſtake with theirs, who are apt to imagine that it is unworthy of God to be every where, and in all places, to behold and be preſent at the worſt of Actions; as if the Sun's Brightneſs would not be the more reſplendent and glorious, if it could penetrate into the obſcureſt Corners and Receſſes of the Earth; or as if his Rays could be ſully'd and defiled by the Foulneſs of any Object which they ſhine upon. And if it be no Diminution to God's Infinite Glory and Majeſty to be Omnipreſent, it can be none to be more nearly and even perſonally united to ſome Part of the Creation; and therefore it cannot be unworthy of God to be ſo united to the Humane Nature, to manifeſt his Love and Favour, and extend his Goodneſs to Mankind. As God is every where preſent, ſo he is in a more eſpecial manner preſent in ſome places, than in others, by the Acts of his Power, or of his Grace and Favour; and he has vouchſafed a more eſpecial Preſence to ſome Perſons than to others; and thus he was preſent with his Prophets, who were ſent to prepare for and foretel Chriſt's Coming. But he was perſonally united to the Humane Nature of Chriſt. And this is the higheſt Honour and Advancement to our Nature, for God thus to aſſume it; but it can be no Diminution to the Divine Majeſty, becauſe God continues as he was from all Eternity, without any Alteration; only by his perſonal Preſence and Union with our Humane Nature, he cauſes all the Performances and Sufferings of it to be meritorious, for the Salvation of Mankind.

The Son of God did not ſo come down from Heaven as to be no longer there, but to forſake his Father's Kingdom: He ſtill continued in Heaven in the ſame Bliſs and Glory, that he enjoy'd with his Father from all Eternity, tho' he ſo manifeſted himſelf to the World, as to come and abide in it by aſſuming our Humane

Humane Nature. Our Saviour tells *Nicodemus*, John iii. 13. *No Man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.* He who fills Heaven and Earth with his Preſence, was ſtill in Heaven as much as ever, with reſpect to his Godhead, tho' he made a more peculiar reſidence than he had before done on Earth, by dwelling in our Nature here. The Son of God who is at all times every where preſent, is yet in a peculiar manner preſent, where-ever he is pleas'd to manifeſt himſelf by peculiar Acts of his Goodneſs and Power, as he was pleas'd to do in a moſt ſtupendous manner in that Fleſh which he took upon him of the Bleſſed Virgin. And it cannot be thought inconſiſtent with the Majeſty of God to actuate the Humane Nature, and to be joined in the moſt ſtrict and vital Union with it, ſuppoſing God only to act upon it, and not to be acted upon by it, nor to ſuffer the Miſeries and feel the Pains which the Humane Nature endures, (which would be Blaſphemy to aſſert of the Divine Nature of Chriſt,) but to be in Heaven ſtill in his full Power and Majeſty.

But ſome Man will ſay, how is this Union between the Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt made, or wherein doth it conſiſt? To whom we may reply, as our Saviour ſometimes did to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, by asking another Queſtion, and enquiring, how the Body and Soul in Man are united? or, how God is preſent in all places? and how *in him we live, and move, and have our Being?* And if no Man can tell how theſe things are, tho' no Man can deny the truth and reality of them, then it is not to be expected, that we ſhould be able to tell how the Union between the Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt is made, or in what it conſiſts. We muſt acknowledge it a Myſtery, which it is above any Man's capacity to explain; but that there is ſuch an Union, we learn from the Scriptures, and thither we appeal for the truth of it.

And

And the putting ſuch Queſtions, argues either a great mind to cavil, or great inconſideration, and ſhortneſs of thought. For what Man is there pretending to Reaſon and Argument, of ſo little obſervation, as not to take notice, that of all the things which we daily ſee and perceive to be in the World, the nature and manner of Exiſtence of very few, or rather of none of them, is fully underſtood by us? It is ſufficient for us to know, that great Reaſons may be given for this diſpenſation of the Son of God incarnate, and that no material Objection can be framed againſt it.

Secondly, No other way (as far as we can apprehend) could have been ſo proper and expedient, as the Incarnation of the Son of God, to procure the Salvation of Mankind, and therefore none could ſo well become the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs. The proof of this muſt depend upon the Reaſons for Chriſt's coming into the World, and they are all comprehended in this one thing, the aboliſhing or taking away of Sin. *And ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our Sins, and in him is no Sin*, 1 John iii. 5. We are to conſider then, that the manifeſtation of Chriſt in the Fleſh, did more powerfully and effectually take away Sin, than any other way or means of Salvation could have done.

I. The Doctrine and Preaching of the Son of God had more Power and Authority with it than the Preaching and Doctrine of a Man or Angel could have had. *God, who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the Worlds*, Heb. i. 1, 2. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip. For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience receiv'd a juſt recompence of reward, how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation, which*

at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3. This being the laſt Meſſage which God had reſolv'd to ſend to Mankind, a Perſon of the greateſt Dignity and Authority was to bring it: *But laſt of all, he ſent unto them his Son, ſaying, they will reverence my Son*, Matth. xxi. 37. It is the laſt expedient, and the very utmoſt that could be done to reduce Sinners to Obedience; and if this will have no effect upon them, they muſt be left without all excuſe. This is the heavieſt aggravation of Sin, and that which renders Men utterly inexcuſable; *he was in the World, and the World was made by him, and the World knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not*, John i. 10, 11. If the only begotten Son of God had not come and manifeſted himſelf in ſo wonderful a manner to the World, ſomething of a Plea might have been pretended; but to reject the Son of God, was an evident deſpight done to the Father, and even *hating* of the *Father* who had ſent him, as our Saviour declares, *John* xv. 22, 23, 24. And the blaſpheming of the Holy Ghoſt, in thoſe who vilified the Miracles of Chriſt, and aſcribed them to *Beelzebub*, was therefore without Forgiveneſs, becauſe it was a rejecting of Chriſt, not as the Son of Man, but as God bleſſed for ever; and a deſpiſing and vilifying that which is the laſt means that can be uſed to reclaim the World; and that means whereby he manifeſted himſelf to be the Son of God. To reject Chriſt, was to reject the whole Trinity, which was jointly concern'd in this wonderful Diſpenſation.

The Dignity of Chriſt's Perſon adds all the force and efficacy to his Doctrine that is poſſible; and therefore it was requiſite, that the Son of God ſhould become incarnate. God had before ſpoken from Heaven, but that was too terrible and full of Majeſty to be born by Mortals; and they that heard the Voice, *entreated that the Word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more:*

more: for they could not endure that which was commanded; and ſo terrible was the ſight, that Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake, Heb. xii. 19, 20, 21. But now God was pleas'd to converſe with Man in a more familiar and humble manner; and our Bleſſed Saviour came to live amongſt Men with all the gentleneſs and meekneſs of the Humane Nature, and all the Authority of the Divine. *For in him dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, Coloſ. ii. 9. The Godhead dwelt here in him under our Humane Nature, laying aſide that awful Majeſty, which no Man can approach unto.

II. We have a greater Example of all Perfection and Holineſs ſet before us by the Son of God Incarnate, than we could otherwiſe have had. It has been the general complaint made of other Teachers and Lawgivers, that they ſeldom obſerve their own Rules, or live themſelves according to what they require of others. But our Saviour has given us an Example, if it be poſſible, even beyond his own Doctrine. For tho' he be no rigorous Lawgiver, but a moſt indulgent and gracious Maſter to us, yet he was pleas'd to excuſe himſelf from no Duty or Inſtance of Obedience, but fulfilled both the Moral and the Ceremonial Law: there is nothing ſo mean, nor ſo difficult and painful, but he perform'd it, to ſet us an abſolute Pattern of Obedience to the Whole Duty of Man, in all that ever God requir'd of Mankind. *It became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*; this was the end and intention of his coming into the World, and he fulfilled it in the moſt abſolute and perfect manner, in all particulars. And to give ſuch an Example, is of unſpeakable uſe and benefit: for Men are more eaſily led by Example than by Precept; and it is commonly obſerv'd, that it is Example, for the moſt part, which governs the World. Men will follow the Vices of thoſe whoſe Vertues they never imitate; and the Faults of Wiſe and Great Men have too ſure and too fatal

fatal an effect upon ſuch, as their Excellencies never reach.

It was neceſſary, that an Example of abſolute Perfection ſhould be given to the World, and this Example muſt be given by one of the ſame nature with our ſelves, or elſe it might have been an Example for Angels and Spirits, but not for Men; and therefore ſuch an Example the Son of God Incarnate only could give, becauſe it was impoſſible for any created Being under all the Infirmities and Temptations incident to Humane Nature to live up to ſuch a Divine Height and Excellency of all Perfection as our Saviour did, and to leave ſuch an Example to the World.

He came not to teach us the Wiſdom of this World, how to get Riches and Honours; in this Mankind was well enough inſtructed before, and it could not but be unworthy of the Son of God to be born into the World with a deſign to enjoy the Pleaſures and the Profits, and the Honours of it; this was beneath the Majeſty of Heaven, and the Infinite Perfection and Eſſential Bliſs and Happineſs of the Divine Nature. But to manifeſt himſelf, to ſhew the mean and worthleſs Vanity of thoſe things, of which Men are ſo fond; to give an Example of Contentment in a low Condition, of Victory under Temptations, and of Patience and Meekneſs under the ſevereſt Afflictions and Torments; to diſcover to Men the way to Happineſs in the worſt Circumſtances of this World, to teach thoſe who enjoy this World's Goods, not to be proud of them, nor deſpiſe others; and thoſe who want them, to be contented and happy without them; to lead Men in the way to Happineſs thro' all Conditions, thro' all the Miſeries and Calamities which muſt befal many of us in this mortal ſtate; this is a Glorious and Godlike Deſign, it is ſuch as none but the Son of God could perform, and ſuch as we may in reaſon believe he would undertake; and for which he might vouchſafe to live a humane Life upon Earth.

III. The Mediation and Interceſſion of Chriſt for us, is of greater power and efficacy than any could have been, if the Son of God had not become Man to die for our ſakes. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. He was to be Man as well as God, that coming with Divine Power and Authority, and yet with the Affability and Acceſſibleneſs of a Man, he might in all reſpects be fully qualified to perform the Office of a Mediator between God and Man. If he had not been God, he could not have come with abſolute Authority to offer us terms of Reconciliation; and unleſs he had been Man, he could not have treated with Men in ſo familiar and condeſcending a way upon theſe terms.

And the Right and Authority of Chriſt's Mediation and Interceſſion in behalf of Sinners, is founded upon his Merits and Satisfaction for the Sins of Men; and this ſuppoſes him to be both God, and Man; *Man*, that he might ſuffer and die for us; and *God*, that his Divine Nature might give an infinite value to his Death and Sufferings, and render them ſatisfactory for the Sins of the World. Tho' it ſhould be ſuppoſed (which can never be proved) that God in his mercy might have pardoned Sinners without the ſatisfaction of Chriſt; yet if in mercy he might have forgiven, he might in juſtice have puniſh'd them, unleſs ſatisfaction had been made; and nothing could have made ſatisfaction to his Juſtice, but the Sufferings of his Son: Becauſe, as the Obedience and Sufferings of no Creature could be ſuppoſed, for his Worth and Excellency, to be equivalent to the Obedience and Sufferings of all Mankind; ſo not only the Performance of his Obedience, and the Patience under his Sufferings, but the Innocence and Perſeverance in Righteouſneſs of every Creature, muſt be aſcribed to the Grace and Goodneſs of God, not to any Power of his own to ſuſtain himſelf; ſo far would

the moſt perfect and excellent Creature be from meriting for others. And becauſe the Obedience and Sufferings of no created Being, could have been of that value as to make ſatisfaction for the Sins of Mankind; therefore no Creature could have redeemed Man, or have become Mediator for him upon the terms of his own Merits in Man's behalf, ſo as to plead the price of Redemption laid down for him. God may grant the Requeſts of Angels and Men, out of his free Mercy and Bounty, but there can be no neceſſary force and efficacy in Interceſſions, where there is no precedent merit and ſatisfaction on the part of the Interceſſor. But Chriſt pleads his Merits on our account, and mediates our Cauſe with his Father upon the terms of ſtrict Juſtice, and by virtue of the Ranſom of his own Blood; and is ſo powerful an Interceſſor for us, that not only the Mercy and Goodneſs, but even the Juſtice of God cannot deny his Interceſſion. It was the free Grace of God to ſend his Son to ſuffer in our ſtead; but ſince he was pleas'd to admit of this Commutation of the Puniſhment which we had deſerv'd, and to transfer it upon his own Son; his Death was *a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World*; which the Death of no Creature could have been, and therefore no created Being could have become our Mediator by virtue of his own Merit, and have ſatisfy'd the utmoſt Juſtice of God; much leſs could any Creature have merited the aſſiſtance of Grace, and the Rewards of Glory for us.

IV. The Incarnation of the Son of God is the moſt effectual means to excite in us Faith, and Hope, and Charity, and unfeigned Love of God, and of our Neighbour, the love of Vertue, and the hatred of Sin; and to diſpoſe and engage us to all Vertue and Piety. The Son of God aſſuming our Nature, gives us the greateſt aſſurance of his compaſſion for our Infirmities, and his deſire of our Happineſs. God is in-

finitely merciful in *his own* Divine Nature, but he never could give ſuch an inſtance of his Mercy and Love towards *ours*, as by taking it upon himſelf; God is eſſential Truth and Holineſs; and yet *willing more abundantly to ſhew to the Heirs of Promiſe the immutability of his Counſel, he confirm'd it with an Oath*; and in like manner in the preſent caſe, God being willing to give us all the grounds for Faith and Confidence in him that can be imagined, took our Nature upon him, that *by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to deceive, we might have a ſtrong Conſolation*, both from the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, and from the Tenderneſs and Compaſſions of our own. *For we have not an High-Prieſt, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*, and therefore are exhorted in this confidence, *to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace*, Heb. iv. 15, 16. vi. 17, 18. We are aſſured, that he has the greateſt concern for that Nature which he has taken into a perſonal Union with himſelf, and continually preſents before his Father in Heaven for us. And we are likewiſe aſſured of the Father's Love towards us; *For now we know* that he loves us, *ſeeing he has not withheld his Son, his only Son from us*, but ſent him into the World to die for our Salvation. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all; how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things? Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us*, Rom. viii. 32, 33, 34.

And as the manifeſtation of Chriſt in the Fleſh, is peculiarly adapted and deſign'd to raiſe our Faith, and Hope, and Truſt, and Confidence, and Dependence upon God, ſo it is above all the moſt prevailing motive to engage our Love. The infinite Love of Chriſt in dying for us, muſt needs require and even extort from us all poſſible returns of Love, and Praiſe, and Adoration.

Adoration. [a] St. *Chryſoſtome* gives this as one Reaſon, why the Son of God was incarnate, to become the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind; becauſe if it had been poſſible for a Creature to undertake and effect our Redemption, Men would never have thought they could have had eſteem enough for him, or have made due expreſſions of their Gratitude, unleſs they had Deified him, and committed Idolatry in Worſhipping him, and paying him all Divine Honours: and to prevent this in *Moſes*, who was but a temporal Deliverer, and but a Type of Chriſt, his Sepulchre was conceal'd from the *Iſraelites*. So dear is the Memory of great and generous Benefactors wont to be, that Men are apt to think they never can be ſufficiently grateful to them, unleſs they even adore and worſhip them; which was one chief occaſion of Idolatry among the Heathens: therefore the Redemption of the whole World was a thing that could belong only to the Son of God, to whom all Love and Reverence, all Worſhip and Adoration is due. And this being the great Aim and Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion to bring us to obey God upon Principles of Love, the Foundation of it is laid in the Love of God towards us. Nothing can be conceiv'd, which could have ſo powerfully prevail'd upon Men to love God, as the Incarnation of his Son; and Love being the only Principle of Obedience which can be acceptable to God, this muſt be the moſt proper and fitting Diſpenſation, which is moſt apt to excite in us the Love of God. The Power and Majeſty of God had been manifeſted before in the Creation, and Preſervation, and Government of the World, and in many ſignal Judgments upon Sinners: the Divine Mercy and Goodneſs was likewiſe viſible in the daily Bleſſings beſtowed upon Mankind, but *the exceeding*

[a] Chryſoſt. λο. ια. Tom. 7.

Riches of his Grace was made known *in his kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus*, Epheſ. ii. 7.

And as this muſt cauſe us to love God, ſo it muſt make us, if any thing can do it, to have Love one for another. God Incarnate is the Head and Vital Principle, the common Bond of Life and Union between Chriſtians; and we are oblig'd to mutual Love, not only becauſe we are all of the ſame nature, but becauſe the Son of God has been pleas'd to dignify that Nature in aſſuming it. This ought to make us value our own Nature, and to have a due Eſteem and Affection for it, in whomſoever it be. How can we deſpiſe any one who is a Partaker of that Nature, of which the Son of God has vouchſafed to partake in its meaneſt condition? or hate any, whom he lov'd ſo well as to die for him? This makes all Men worthy of our Reſpect and Love, not of our Contempt or Hatred; they are of that Nature, which Chriſt, as Man, is of; and they are his Purchaſe, and we muſt love what is his, and what he has ſo dearly paid for, if we love Chriſt himſelf. *Beloved*, ſays St. *John*, *if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another*, 1 Joh. iv. 11. And this is St. *Paul*'s Argument to the *Corinthians*, to excite them to Charity towards their poor Brethren. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that tho' he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye thro' his poverty might be rich*, 2 Cor. viii. 9.

The Incarnation of the Son of God muſt likewiſe cauſe us to have the greateſt Hatred and Deteſtation of Sin, as being that which is moſt diſpleaſing to God, and that which occaſioned the Death of his only Son to atone for it. And it is evident, that all who *neglect ſo great Salvation*, muſt expect the heavieſt Puniſhment for ſo heinous a Contempt and Provocation: if we will be gained by any Methods of Love, Chriſt has done all that is poſſible to effect it: But if we will not be moved by all the Kindneſs and Compaſſions of Love it ſelf, we can hope for no farther

Favour;

Favour; if the Son of God came to die for us, and we will not regard it so as to be made the better by it, nothing more can be look'd for, but *Wrath and fiery Indignation.*

So that the Manifestation of the Son of God in the Flesh was the most proper and fitting means to work upon the Love, and Fear, and Hope, and all the Passions of Mankind, and to produce all those Graces in us which the Gospel requires. It is the best fitted both to the Nature and Design of the Gospel, and to the Nature of Man; and therefore if any other means had been possible, yet none that we can conceive could have been so effectual to procure the Salvation of Men.

But that the Son of God incarnate should not only suffer, but suffer to that Extremity both of Body and Mind, has been a great Objection in the Mouths and Writings of the Infidels of our days, and of all former Ages; and therefore I shall speak to it more at large. Our Blessed Saviour himself, after his Resurrection, puts this Question to *Cleopas* and the other Disciples, who were walking to *Emmaus*, in great Sorrow and Perplexity of Mind, by reason of his Death; *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. Which implies, that there were great and indispensable Reasons for this wonderful Dispensation of the Divine Goodness. The Sufferings of Christ were necessary both for the Expiation of the Sins of Mankind, and for his own Exaltation in Heaven, there to become our Intercessor at the Right Hand of God the Father. They were in order to his *Entrance into his Glory.*

1. His Sufferings were necessary to expiate the Sins of Mankind. A wise and good Governour will neither pardon Crimes committed against the Order and End of his Government upon slight Terms, nor omit any due Care to provide, both that Satisfaction may be made for the Violation of his Laws, and that those

who have been guilty of the Breach of them, may become ſerviceable to him for the future. God the Father therefore, the great Lord and Governour of the World, in his Juſtice required ſuch Satisfaction for the Sins of Men, as no Creature could make him; and his Son voluntarily offer'd himſelf for our Atonement: Which Propoſal the Father was pleas'd ſo far to accept and approve, as to ſend the Son into the World, and permit him to be crucify'd. For there is as true and real, tho' not the ſame, Diſtinction between the Three Perſons of the Godhead, as there is between the Perſons of Men. And the Father and Son tranſacted this gracious Work of our Redemption, in like manner as a King's Son might pay down a Ranſom to his Father for his diſobedient Subjects, to exempt them from that Forfeiture of their Lives or Eſtates, which they had incurr'd.

According to this Agreement, *he who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us*, (2 Cor. v. 21.) He ſuſtain'd the Perſon of Sinners, by undergoing the Puniſhment due to Sin. Chriſt's Sufferings being meritorious, were to be in that Meaſure and Degree, as to make it evident, that he ſuffer'd and merited for the whole World. He bore all the Weight and Burthen of Sin, and all the Wrath and Curſe of God, which was due to it, was expiated in his Perſon; and for this, as well as other Reaſons, he had not thoſe Supports and Comforts under his unſpeakable Sufferings and Torments, which St. *Stephen* and other Martyrs have found. But his Divine Nature was pleas'd only to ſuſtain his Humane, not to relieve it; and to add infinite Merit to his Sufferings, not to remove or abate them. He promis'd his Diſciples to ſend the Comforter, who would abide with them, and ſupport them in all Temptations and Sufferings: Which Promiſe he conſtantly fulfill'd, and miraculous Graces of Courage and Patience were afforded them in all their Afflictions. But his own Sufferings were ſo much grea-

ter than any of theirs ever were, that his Humane Nature was, as it were, *forſaken* of his Divine Nature; notwithſtanding the inſeparable Union of both Natures; and his Soul was left for a time deſtitute of Conſolation, as his Body afterwards lay in the Grave, void of Life, notwithſtanding the perpetual Union of the Divine with the whole Humane Nature, after its Aſſumption.

When it is alleged, that a much leſs degree of Sufferings in the Son of God would have been an Equivalent Satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind. It may be ſufficient to anſwer, that God, to manifeſt his utmoſt Hatred and Deteſtation of Sin, was pleas'd to demand of his own Son all that Humane Nature, in its higheſt ſtate of Innocence and Righteouſneſs, could undergo. The Vindication owing to his Honour, and the Reparation due to his Juſtice, could not be perform'd at an eaſier Price, than by the moſt perfect Obedience, and the extremeſt Sufferings.

And as the Divine and Humane Nature are perſonally united in Chriſt, ſo they both concurr'd in effecting our Redemption. The Humane Nature had the ſuffering Part, which was to be complete in its kind, and then to receive the utmoſt Perfection, and become fully meritorious and expiatory, by virtue of the Union between the Humane and the Divine Nature. The Sufferings of the *Son of Man*, in themſelves great beyond Conception, and valuable beyond all Compariſon, are of infinite Merit and Efficacy, becauſe he is the *Son of God*.

The Humane Nature in Chriſt was to ſuffer for the Sins of the ſame Nature in *Adam* and his Poſterity; and therefore the Meaſure and Degree of Suffering in the One, was to bear ſuch Proportion to the Sins of the Other, that in our Humane Nature, the ſtricteſt and moſt abſolute Obedience might be perform'd; and all poſſible Amends might be made by the Sufferings of the Humane Nature, as far as it was capable,

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for the Diſobedience of Mankind. But ſince the Humane Nature, of it ſelf, muſt needs ſo far fall ſhort of a full Satisfaction; the Divine Nature, in virtue of its Perſonal Union with the Humane, did, by infinite Merit, ſupply all Deficiencies. The Humane Nature was to go as far towards a Satisfaction, as it was capable; and the Union of it with the Divine Nature made out what muſt of neceſſity be wanting in any created Nature. We may aſſuredly conclude, that if any created Being could have effected the Expiation of Sin, it muſt have been the Humane Nature of Chriſt, in which was perform'd all, that could be done towards an Expiation, and his Divine Nature made it a full Expiation and Satisfaction.

2. Chriſt's Sufferings were neceſſary in order to his own Exaltation in Heaven. This the Scripture expreſly and frequently teaches. *But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the ſuffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour, that he by the Grace of God, ſhould taſte Death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings*, Heb. ii. 9, 10. Chriſt is here ſaid for the ſuffering of Death, to be crowned with Glory and Honour, and being the Captain or Author of our Salvation, he was in his Humane Nature made perfect and fit for Glory in Heaven, through his Sufferings upon Earth. *Who in the days of his Fleſh, when he had offered up Prayers and Supplications, with ſtrong Crying and Tears, unto him that was able to ſave him from Death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the things which he ſuffered, and being made perfect he became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him*, (Heb. v. 7.) Though he be in his Divine Nature the eternal Son of God; yet his Obedience in his Humane Nature was to be made complete and entire by the things which he ſuffer'd, and

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he was, in reſpect of that Nature, to be hereby rendred perfect, and fully accompliſh'd, to be our Mediator and Interceſſor, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, *who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God*, (Heb. xii. 2.)

Our Saviour was born of the Bleſſed Virgin in the greateſt Purity and Innocence. But, as his Body was to receive gradual Improvements in Growth and Strength; ſo his Soul was capable of higher Perfections, than it brought into the World. For we read of Chriſt in the ſame Words, which are before uſed of St. *John Baptiſt*, (Luke i. 80.) that *the child grew and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit*, and then it is added, that he was *filled with Wiſdom*; *and the Grace of God was upon him.* And again, *Jeſus increaſed in Wiſdom and Stature, and in favour with God and Man*, (Luke ii. 40, 52.) He was born in a ſtate of unſpotted Innocence and Righteouſneſs, but the Faculties of his Mind advanced in Wiſdom, and attain'd continually higher degrees of Perfection, as his Body improv'd in Stature.

And that he might in his Humane Nature arrive at the higheſt ſtate of Perfection, of which a Creature could be capable, and might merit to be placed as Head over the whole Creation, it was neceſſary (as St. *Paul* often declares) that this Captain of our Salvation, this Author and Finiſher of our Faith, ſhould be made perfect through Sufferings, and then *enter into his Glory*, and ſit at the Right Hand of God the Father, *far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come*, (Epheſ. i. 21.) *Angels, and Authorities, and Powers, being made ſubject unto him*, (1 Pet. iii. 22.)

The Exaltation of the Humane Nature of Chriſt was in Recompenſe for its great Sufferings, and theſe were to bear as full a Proportion, as might be, to the Reward. The Son of God, of the ſame Nature with

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his Father, *made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men. And being found in faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs. Wherefore*, for this Reaſon, and upon this Account and Conſideration, *God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name; that at the Name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus is Chriſt, to the Glory of God the Father*, (Phil. ii. 7.)

Some Men object: If the Son of God, incarnate, muſt have ſuffer'd; yet why muſt he needs have ſuffer'd in that manner? why to that Extremity? why with ſuch Agonies of Soul, as well as Torments of Body? Were not a few Drops of Blood ſhed by the Son of God ſufficient to atone for the Sins of the whole World? Was then the reſt as Water ſpilt upon the Ground, or running waſte, without any Uſe or Benefit? God forbid. But thoſe who put ſuch raſh and bold Queſtions, may receive this full and plain Anſwer, That *Chriſt ought thus to have ſuffered*, becauſe his Humane Nature was to be as Inſtrumental, and to contribute as much, as was poſſible, to the Expiation of the Sins of Men: and it was by theſe Sufferings to be rais'd to the higheſt Perfections, that any Creature could poſſibly attain, that in Recompenſe for the ſame Sufferings, it might receive ſuch Honours and Rewards, as no Creature beſides could receive, and might be placed at the Right Hand of God, above every Created Being. *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffer'd theſe things*, that he might *enter into his Glory?* Into that Glory, which by the gracious and wonderful Diſpenſation of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, was prepar'd in Reward for ſuch Sufferings, and due to ſuch Merit.

Another Objection is made, That the Son of God ſhould ſuffer ſo much, and yet ſhould himſelf declare, that there be few who will be ſaved. I ſhall not here repeat, what has been already ſaid of the promulgation of the Old and New Teſtament throughout the World, of the reaſonableneſs of Man's being created capable of Sin and Damnation, and of the conſiſtency of the eternity of Hell Torments with the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God, how great ſoever the Number be of thoſe who ſuffer them. I ſhall here only ſay, that how few ſoever they, who ſhall be ſaved, will be in compariſon of the number of the Wicked, condemned to everlaſting Puniſhment: yet the Salvation of all, that ſhall be ſaved, is ſolely owing to the Merits of Chriſt's Sufferings; and that the Wicked might have been ſaved by virtue of the ſame Merits, if they had not neglected their own Salvation. And let thoſe, who urge this Objection, conſider, if there be few that will be ſaved upon the terms of the Goſpel, how many more would be ſaved upon the terms of natural Religion. Can Men that live in the Practice of the Crimes of Murther, Adultery, Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, have any reaſonable hopes of Salvation, upon any terms of Religion, whether it be natural or revealed? Or, can thoſe, who make this an Objection againſt the Goſpel, hope to eſcape better by any thing, which can deſerve to be called Religion, and is agreeable to the general Notions which Mankind have, of Juſtice, Temperance, and common Honeſty? Our Bleſſed Saviour has taught us the proper and uſeful Inference, which ought to be made from this Doctrine. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able, when once the Maſter of the Houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the Door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he ſhall anſwer and ſay unto you, I know not whence ye are,* Luke xiii. 24, 25. When once the opportunity

nity of working out their own Salvation is loſt, the Belief and Profeſſion of Religion, nay, even Gifts of Miracles and Prophecy, will be of no advantage to evil Men; ſo far will prophane Cavils and Objections be from ſtanding them in any ſtead.

CHAP. XXII.

Of Chriſt's being tempted by the Devil.

IT may ſeem a very ſtrange, and almoſt incredible thing, That the Son of God ſhould permit himſelf to be tempted of the Devil, and that, not in ſuch a manner, as Men are wont to be tempted; by ſuggeſtions and inſinuations upon their Minds, but by being carried by him from place to place, and enduring his inſults both of Words and Actions, for forty Days, as St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* aſſure us. That not only wicked Men, but that Apoſtate Spirit, the profeſs'd Enemy of God, the vileſt and worſt part of the whole Creation, abandoned to all Evil, ſhould be ſuffered to make ſuch attempts upon the Perſon of him, who is God bleſſed for ever, infinite in Holineſs and in Power, might be thought Blaſphemy to imagine, if we had not the expreſs Word of Scripture for the truth of it. I ſhall therefore, I. Give an Account of this wonderful Diſpenſation: And then, II. I ſhall make ſome few Obſervations upon it.

I. I ſhall give an Account of this wonderful Diſpenſation. The Sufferings of the Son of God were as much the deſign and buſineſs of his coming into the World, as his moſt miraculous Works, and the moſt glorious Acts and Manifeſtations of his Divine Power. It was to make an atonement for our Sins by his Sufferings, that he deſcended from Heaven, and vouchſafed to dwell among Men. His Almighty Power might

might have been made manifeſt in as many, and as wonderful inſtances, if he had never taken our Nature upon him; but he was to become Man, that he might be capable of ſuffering for us. For he could ſuffer only in his humane Nature; and he was to ſuffer in his whole humane Nature, both in Body and in Soul, all that evil Men or evil Spirits could inflict, that *the Captain of our Salvation*, in his humane Nature, *might be made perfect by* theſe *Sufferings*, and that this Nature in him might endure all, which in its moſt perfect ſtate it could undergo, in ſatisfaction for the Sins of the ſame Nature in us. Chriſt was contented to be now tempted by the Devil, in his great Goodneſs and Compaſſion to Mankind, who were *taken captive by him at his will*, to prevent their being tormented by him for ever in Hell. Therefore *was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderneſs to be tempted of the Devil.* The Diſpenſation of the Goſpel required, that Chriſt ſhould be tempted by Devils, as well as tormented and crucified by Men, that he might gain an abſolute Conqueſt over all his and our Enemies, and aſcend triumphant in our Nature into Heaven.

It was no more unworthy of the Son of God to undergo the Aſſaults of Devils, than to ſuffer the Injuries and Indignities of Men, to be expoſed to the Temptations of Satan, to be placed by him firſt upon a Pinacle of the Temple, in order to perſuade him to caſt himſelf down from thence, and then to be removed by him to an exceeding high Mountain, the Devil endeavouring to ſeduce him with the Proſpect of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, which, as in a Glaſs, were from thence repreſented to him in one view; all this was no more below the infinite Honour and Dignity of the Son of God, than it was for him to be dragged before *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, and then ſent to *Pilate*, and by him to *Herod*, to be expoſed in Royal Robes to the Affronts

fronts and Mockery of the Soldiers, to be buffeted, and ſpit upon, and ſcourged, and at laſt crucified: And in his laſt Agonies, *his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful even unto Death*, which forced from him that loud and dreadful Cry, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* But there was nothing hurtful, nothing terrifying to him in this approach of Satan. Chriſt bore his impious Words, and inſolent Uſage, as long as he pleaſed, and as long as was fitting, and inſtrumental to the Ends of his Incarnation, and then with Authority charged him to depart. He had Legions of Angels at his command, if he would have employed them againſt his Enemies: *But how then ſhould the Scriptures have been fulfilled?* How had the ending of his coming into the World been accompliſhed?

The Devil ſeeing our Saviour in the Wilderneſs for ſo long time, with the *wild Beaſts*, as St. *Mark* acquaints us, and *hungry*, as the other Evangeliſts inform us, without any Food to ſuſtain himſelf, was in doubt whether Chriſt was indeed the Son of God: and to try whether he were or no, he tempts him to work a Miracle to ſatisfie his Hunger, by commanding the Stones in the Wilderneſs to be turned into Bread. It had been as eaſie for our Saviour to ſend this accurſed Fiend immediately into Hell, as it could be to cauſe Stones to be made Bread, or to do any thing elſe: But that was not to be done before the time; he now confutes him from the Scriptures, and vanquiſhes him by the *Words proceeding out of the Mouth of God:* And our Saviour no ſooner bids him be gone, but the Devil had no power to diſobey. And it was not long before he ſhewed, that he had abſolute Authority over Devils, and forced them to a confeſſion of his Divine Power, as we read in the ſame Chapters of St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, in which they mention his Temptations by the Devil; and St. *Matthew* in the Chapter, in which he relates theſe Temptations, ſays, That they brought unto him from all Parts,

Parts, thoſe *which were poſſeſſed with Devils, and he healed them*, (Matth. iv. 24. Mark i. 21. Luke iv. 23.)

God's Ways are not as Man's Ways, nor his Thoughts as Man's Thoughts. Men take the firſt opportunity of vanquiſhing an Enemy, for fear, if that be loſt, another may never offer it ſelf: they take their Enemies at all advantages, and think no diſpatch too ſpeedy to rid themſelves of them. But God takes his own time; he is never in haſte, who has all Seaſons and Opportunities in his power and diſpoſal. He bears with the Indignities and Blaſphemies of wicked Men, and of Satan himſelf, when he chuſes to advance his own Glory by this means, rather than by ſending immediate confuſion and deſtruction upon them.

When the Devil had left Chriſt, *behold*, ſays St. *Matthew*, *Angels came and miniſtred unto him.* They before kept their diſtance; but now was the time for their attendance; when Satan had been put to flight, by no force but that of the Divine Truth and Wiſdom. He had deceived our firſt Parents in *Paradiſe*, and perſuaded them againſt the expreſs Word of God, to eat of the forbidden Fruit, to the fall of themſelves, and of their Poſterity: But the Son of Man, the ſecond *Adam*, in the barren Wilderneſs, after long Abſtinence, in great want of Food, and ſollicited by him out of the Scripture it ſelf, miſapplyed, was ſo far from being prevailed upon to work a Miracle for his own preſervation, or to yield in the leaſt meaſure to any of his allurements; that he ſubdued this Enemy of Mankind with *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* What could be more proper for the Son of Man, than to put to confuſion the infernal Pride and Arrogance, by a few words of his mouth, without exerting any other Power, than that of ſpeaking with a humane Voice, and alleging thoſe Scriptures which were known to all the *Jews*, and contained no ſublime or difficult Doctrine, but ſuch as every

Man may eaſily underſtand, and the Devil himſelf could not gainſay. And who knows, but this Rebuke and Diſappointment might be as grievous to the Pride and Stubbornneſs of his Nature, as if he had been by never ſo great force of Torments compelled to deſiſt.

This was the beginning of Chriſt's Conqueſts over Satan: he ſuffered himſelf to be tempted by him, and thereby, at once, both atoned the Wrath of God, by ſo meritorious a ſubmiſſion to that, which is wont to be moſt horrible and dreadful to humane Nature; and overcame the Enemy of Mankind in ſuch a way, as ſhewed the humane Nature in Chriſt to be ſuperior to all the Malice and Subtilty of the Old Serpent. When it was requiſite, in order to our Salvation, our Bleſſed Saviour was contented to endure the Aſſaults of Men and Devils. *This was their Hour, and the Power of Darkneſs*, (Luke xxii. 53.) Men were continually his viſible Enemies; and St. *Luke* ſays, That *when the Devil had ended all the Temptation, he departed from him*, but *for a ſeaſon*, (chap. iv. 13.) But it is certain, this wicked One, who now was his tempter, was forced frequently afterwards to be his own accuſer, and to confeſs, that Jeſus was the *Chriſt, the holy One of God*, by the Mouths of thoſe whom he had poſſeſſed, and by his moſt famed Oracles.

II. I now proceed to make ſome few Obſervations upon this wonderful Diſpenſation of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

1. We may obſerve, that this Temptation of our Saviour by the Devil, when he was alone in the Wilderneſs, had never been known to the World, but by the Relation of the Evangeliſts, who have concealed nothing of his Humiliation, and his Sufferings, which he endured either from Devils or Men, but inſiſt rather more upon them, than upon any other part of his Life: Becauſe, tho' they may be moſt liable to the Objections and Cavils of inconſiderate

and ill Men, yet they are really the moſt advantageous and comfortable part of his Hiſtory, to all who have been taught *as the Truth is in Chriſt Jeſus*, and who ſo underſtand the Principles of our Religion, as to receive it in the Love of the Truth, and to live in the Belief and Obedience of the Goſpel. For,

2. By this Temptation of our Bleſſed Saviour, his infinite Goodneſs towards us is more manifeſted and endeared to us, than by the many Miracles which he ſo often wrought: thoſe ſhewed his Power over the whole Creation, and his Compaſſion to all, who were cured and relieved by him. But his Mercy is more magnified, by his condeſcending to ſuffer thus for us, than by the greateſt inſtance of his Power. To caſt Devils out of particular Perſons, was an Act of great Goodneſs; but to permit the Aſſaults of Satan upon himſelf, that he might thereby for ever ſubdue him, and free Mankind from his Tyranny, was the moſt wonderful and gracious Effect of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs. If he had ſtruck all his Murtherers dead, and commanded all the wicked Spirits to the Depth of Hell, this had been done with as much eaſe to him, in reſpect of his Divine Nature, and without the leaſt trouble in reference to his Humane. But the Diſpenſation of the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God, according to the Goſpel required, that he ſhould ſuffer for us; and he ſuffered in every kind; he refuſed to undergo nothing for our ſakes, but was carried in a ſort of Triumph by Satan himſelf, that the human Nature in him might become the more ſignally triumphant over all the Powers of Hell. Our Nature *in Chriſt* was to endure all that could be undergone by it, in a ſtate of perfect Innocence and Holineſs, to make ſatisfaction for the Sins of it *in us*. And it was the infinite Goodneſs of the Son of God to take our Nature upon him, that he might ſubmit to be aſſaulted by the attempts even of Satan himſelf, in order to procure our Salvation.

3. He was to be a perfect Example to us, not only of all Righteouſneſs, but of all Patience and Meekneſs, under all manner of Sufferings. We are not exempted from the Temptations of the Devil, but muſt expect to be aſſaulted by them; and we have frequent warning againſt them given us in the Scriptures, (*James* iv. 7. 1 *Pet.* v. 8. *Epheſ.* vi. 10.) Tho' they now befal us, not by any viſible Appearance of him, but by his inward inſtigations, and by his contrivance and diſpoſal of outward Objects and Accidents, to entice, or to affright us from our Duty.

And as the Apoſtles uſe earneſt Admonitions and Exhortations, ſo our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf was pleaſed, by his own Example, to teach us, with Faith and Patience, and by the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, to reſiſt and overcome this *wicked One*, who takes advantage ſometimes of our Neceſſities, as he tempted Chriſt, after he had faſted forty Days and forty Nights, to ſupply his want of Proviſions in the Wilderneſs, by turning Stones into Bread; and he often is troubleſom and vexatious to us, even in the time of our Humiliation and Religious Abſtinence. Sometimes he makes uſe of the Splendor and Allurements of this World for his Baits; as when he tempted Chriſt, by offering him all the Kingdoms of it, if he would worſhip him. And we may obſerve, that he enforces his Temptations by perverting the Words of Scripture to his evil Purpoſes. For we here find him alleging them to our Saviour; and St. *Paul* teaches us, that *Satan himſelf is transformed into an Angel of Light*; from whence he makes this Inference, that *therefore it is no wonder, if his Miniſters alſo be transformed, as the Miniſters of Righteouſneſs*, (2 Cor. xi. 14.) And ſince we are continually expoſed to ſo many Temptations from Satan and his Inſtruments, there could not be a more inſtructive and uſeful Example given us, than this of our Saviour, under Temptations of ſuch a nature, as, it

ſeems,

ſeems, are found by the Tempter, to prove ſucceſsful over thoſe, whom other Temptations would not affect, and therefore he choſe out theſe to be employed againſt our Saviour himſelf. We here ſee the whole ſtrength and ſubtilty of the Powers of Darkneſs, and the utmoſt they can offer, or ſuggeſt: and we at the ſame time ſee how theſe are to be reſiſted, and what defiance we muſt bid to this Enemy of our Souls.

4. This affords us the greateſt Comfort and Encouragement under all Temptations, that can at any time befal us from this cruel and reſtleſs Enemy. Before the Victories of our Saviour over Satan, which began in the Wilderneſs, and became entire and univerſal by the propagation of his Goſpel throughout the World; the Devil exerciſed ſuch a Tyranny over Mankind, that he is ſtyled, *The God of this World*, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) that is, of the Men of this World; it may be tranſlated of this *Age*, or *Generation*, which was as wicked as has been known in any time. *We know that we are of God*, ſays St. *John*; *and the whole World lyeth in Wickedneſs*, (1 John v. 19.) And St. *Paul* affirms, that *the things which the Gentiles ſacrificed, they ſacrificed to Devils, and not to God*, (1 Cor. x. 20.) *They offered up their Sons and their Daughters to Devils.* And not only in barbarous Nations, but at *Athens* and *Rome*, the Seats of the Wiſdom and Empire of this World, the Devil was worſhip'd with humane Sacrifices, as well as in all other abominable ways of Wickedneſs. He was the God of the Heathen, who were then ſo much the greateſt part of the World. He was the God of this Generation, or the [a] God of this World, as it is oppoſite to the *World to come*, and to the Powers and Intereſts of it, (*Heb.* ii. 5. vi. 5.) So that he was juſtly ſtyled by St. *Paul*, *The God of this World*, which was then ſo much under

[a] Ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν, ὁ νομιζόμενος εἶναι Θεὸς ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ. Cyrill. contra Jul. l. 8. fin.

his Dominion and Tyranny. And he is by the ſame Apoſtle call'd *the Prince of the Power of the Air*, (Epheſ. ii. 2.) Not, as I conceive, that the Devil has more Power over the Air, than over the reſt of the Creation; but as the true God is often ſtyled the God of Heaven; ſo the Devil, on the contrary, is once termed the Prince of the Air, becauſe his Power reaches no farther, but is confined to this lower World, and becauſe he durſt not approach the Regions of Heaven, but he is *the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Diſobedience*, who *walk according to the Courſe of this World*; more eſpecially, according to that, which was the Courſe of it, at the time of the Apoſtle's writing of that Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*. And though his Oracles are ceas'd, his Worſhip abandon'd, and humane Sacrifices, which were ſo generally practis'd every where before Chriſtianity, are ſcarce known now in the World; and Poſſeſſions and Apparitions of Evil Spirits are ſeldom heard of, and much ſeldomer to be credited: yet he is ſuffer'd to be a Tempter ſtill, but under ſuch Reſtraints, that unleſs it be through their own Fault, his Temptations will only ſerve to exerciſe the Faith, and improve the Graces of thoſe, againſt whom they are employ'd.

The Scripture gives us ſo many Cautions againſt the Temptations and Wiles of Satan, that there is much Reaſon to believe and to lament, that this ſpiritual Enemy, this implacable Adverſary loſes no Opportunity to take advantage of the Humours, and Conſtitutions, the Paſſions and Inclinations of Men; that he may work their Ruin. Some he leads on in the delightful ways of Folly and Madneſs; others he would drive to Deſpair; and to their great Trouble and Vexation, ſuggeſts to them evil Thoughts, and wicked Imaginations, which they lament and abhor, and complain that they are forced and obtruded upon their Minds againſt all their Endeavours to hinder it.

Now,

Now, what can be a more proper and comfortable Conſideration to one in this afflicted Condition, than to remember, that our Saviour himſelf, who was without all Sin, yet was not without Temptation? The Devil endeavour'd to prevail with him to tempt God, and to worſhip himſelf; and his impious and blaſphemous Words enter'd into our Saviour's Ears, and into his Thoughts; he heard and knew what was ſpoken to him; but rejected and anſwer'd him, not only without Sin, but with the higheſt Merit, and the moſt glorious Victory. And this, among other excellent things, we learn from hence, That no Suggeſtions of Satan, unleſs they gain our Conſent and Approbation, much leſs if they be renounced and rejected, can be the Cauſe of Sin in any Man. To be tempted, whether it be by Words, or any other way, without Conſent, can be no Sin: becauſe we are aſſured from the Scripture, that Chriſt himſelf was tempted, who knew no Sin. In this caſe, to be tempted is only a Trial, and will be ſo far from deſerving Puniſhment, that it will be rewarded; if he, who is thus like Chriſt in being tempted, be as like him in reſiſting the Temptation. And we are aſſured, that we have a *merciful and faithful High-Prieſt in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the Sins of the People*; and that Chriſt will aſſiſt and comfort us under all Temptations, upon this very account, becauſe he was tempted himſelf. *For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* And he is as willing as he is able to help us, on the ſame Conſideration: *For we have not an High-Prieſt, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.* Theſe are the true Ends and Reaſons, why our Saviour ſuffer'd Temptation; and the proper and natural Inference and Concluſion from hence, is that which St. *Paul* makes: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain*

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Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need, (Heb. ii. 18. iv. 15, 16.)

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the Fulneſs of Time, or the Time appointed by God for the Incarnation of our Bleſſed Saviour.

SInce we have ſo great Evidence to ſatisfie us, that Chriſt did come into the World, and die for us, it would be the greateſt Ingratitude and Folly, as well as Impiety to reject him, tho' we ſhould not be able to give any exact account concerning the Reaſons for the time of his coming. *It is not for* us *to know the Times or the Seaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power,* Acts i. 7. Theſe things are in God's diſpoſal, and unleſs we can be contented to leave the manner and circumſtances of our Salvation to his Wiſdom, we only ſhew how little we deſerve his Mercies, and how unwilling we are to believe them, and to accept of them. But tho' it be a meer Cavil to diſpute the coming of Chriſt upon a bare Circumſtance and Nicety concerning the Reaſons for the particular time of his Incarnation; yet it will be eaſie to give ſuch an account of the time appointed for the Incarnation of our Bleſſed Saviour, as may ſerve to ſilence all Objections againſt it; and to deſire to know any farther of it is an uſeleſs and unwarrantable Curioſity; for all muſt acknowledge that God may have the beſt and wiſeſt Reaſons for his Diſpenſations, which yet we may not be able to comprehend, and which it doth not concern us to know. The Scripture teacheth us, that Chriſt was born in the *Fulneſs of Time*, when all things were fulfill'd and accompliſhed in order to it, and the World was in a due readineſs and preparation for his Coming.

1. God

1. God had beforehand us'd all other means to ſhew the neceſſity of ſending his Son at laſt, for he was not to be ſent but upon neceſſity; and it was fit they to whom he was ſent, ſhould be ſenſible of that neceſſity, that they might the better know how to value the infinite Mercy of God towards them, in ſending his only Son to be born and to die for them. In the beginning of the World, and at the Repeopling it after the Flood, Revelations were ſo frequent, and the Will and Commands of God ſo well known, and his Promiſe to ſend his Son ſo clearly underſtood, that there could be no neceſſity that Chriſt ſhould be born then, ſince their Faith in him and their Obedience to God's Commandments was as effectual to the Salvation of them that liv'd ſo long before his Coming, as it is to us, that live ſo many Ages after it. The Lives of Men in the beginning of the World were ſo long, and the Generations deceas'd were ſo few before the Flood, that nothing but wilful Ignorance and Negligence could be the Cauſe of ſo much Wickedneſs. And after the Flood, the Race of Mankind being reduc'd to ſo few Perſons, the Example and Inſtructions of *Noah* and *Abraham*, and the other Patriarchs, might have been ſufficient to keep Men within the Meaſures of their Duty, and to preſerve a Belief and Expectation of the promis'd *Meſſiah*. For they were ſaved by their Faith in Chriſt to come, as we muſt be ſaved by Faith in him already come ſo many Ages paſt. We are expreſly told, that the *Goſpel was preached unto Abraham*, (Gal. iii. 8.) and that *Abraham* rejoiced at the diſtant Proſpect which he had of the Coming of Chriſt, (*Joh.* viii. 56.) and he certainly, who inſtructed his Poſterity in all parts of their Duty, (*Gen.* xviii. 19.) would omit nothing of that moſt neceſſary Knowledge and Faith in the Meſſiah; and therefore to ſuppoſe it neceſſary that he ſhould be born in thoſe Ages, we muſt ſuppoſe it neceſſary that he ſhould be born in every Age of the World, which I think no Man will imagine.

But

But when the reſt of the World was generally fallen away to Idolatry, God choſe to himſelf one Perſon, from whom by a Courſe of Miracles he rais'd a mighty Nation, who by their Journeyings and Captivities, and by all the Diſpenſations of his Providence towards them, were appointed to make known his Name and Truth among the *Gentiles*. In the time of *Moſes* this People it ſelf was uncapable of that pure and ſpiritual Worſhip, which the *Meſſiah* was to appoint, and ſtood in need of a Ceremonial Law and Service to reſtrain them from Idolatry, and to preſerve the Senſe and Remembrance of the Promiſes and Laws deliver'd to *Adam*, and *Noah*. And this Ritual Service was unworthy that the *Meſſiah* ſhould come purpoſely to appoint it, who was indeed himſelf the principal thing ſignify'd and typify'd by it; and the Types and Figures of himſelf could not be inſtituted by himſelf in Perſon; for then they would have been inſignificant, and there could have been no uſe or occaſion for them. But the moſt excellent and Divine Inſtitution was reſerv'd for his Appointment, to which all the reſt was but preparatory. The Law *was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſions, till the Seed ſhould come, to whom the Promiſe was made*, Gal. iii. 19.

After the Revelation of God's Will and Commandments had, through the great Neglect and Wickedneſs of Mankind, become ineffectual, God *ſent all his Servants the Prophets daily riſing up early, and ſending them*; an Expreſſion ſetting forth his great Care and Watchfulneſs over his People for their Good, *yet they hearkned not unto him, nor enclined their ear, but hardned their neck*, Jer. vii. 25, 26. To cure this ſtrange Stubbornneſs, and their Proneneſs to Idolatry, God ſent this People into Captivity for Seventy years; which wrought ſo thorough a Reformation in them, that they were never afterwards given to Idolatry, but endur'd all Extremities of Torments rather than they would be brought to any Compliance with the Hea-

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then Worſhip, and therefore there could be no longer ſuch neceſſity that the Ceremonial Law ſhould be continu'd to them, to keep them from the Worſhip of Idols: But in other reſpects their Provocations were ſtill very great. And as the Lord in the Parable firſt ſent his Servants, and laſt of all his Son, ſaying, *they will reverence my Son*; and thereby left thoſe wicked Men without excuſe, and manifeſted the Juſtice of his Vengeance upon the Murtherers of his own Son. So God firſt ſent his Prophets, and when the *Jews* who had been train'd in the Knowledge and Worſhip of him, and were to convey it to other Nations, would not be reclaim'd by them, but revil'd and deſtroy'd them, and then ſet up their own Traditions in Oppoſition to their Doctrines; he ſends his Beloved Son before he would utterly take away their City and Nation, and effected that by the Death of his Son, whom they crucify'd, which the Experience of ſo many Ages had ſhewn could be effected no other way.

God reveal'd himſelf *at ſundry times, and in divers manners*, and in his Infinite Wiſdom proportion'd the ways and meaſure of his Revelations to the Capacities and the Neceſſities of the ſeveral Ages, in which they were made, till at laſt he *hath ſpoken unto us by his Son*, Heb. i. 1, 2. *When we were Children we were in bondage under the Elements of the World: but when the Fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law*, Gal. iv. 3, 4.

2. The Reception of Chriſt and his Goſpel in the World would have been much more difficult, if ſo many Prophets in ſo many ſeveral Ages had not foretold his Coming. Our Saviour himſelf and his Apoſtles after him appeal to *Moſes* and the Prophets for the Truth of their Doctrine; this was the great Argument which they us'd to the *Jews* in Confirmation even of their Miracles themſelves, they prov'd that the Prophets had foretold that Chriſt ſhould come at that very time when he came, and that he ſhould work

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those Miracles which he wrought, and should empower his Disciples to do the like: his Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, were all propheſy'd of; and Prophecies thus foretelling the Miracles, and Miracles fulfilling the Prophecies, and both mutually confirming and supporting each other, afforded all the Evidence that could be given; for Prophecies and Miracles are all the ways by which God can be suppos'd to reveal himself to Mankind. And therefore thousands of the *Jews* were convinc'd out of the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, and were converted to the Christian Faith. And the Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* are still an unanswerable Argument in vindication of our Religion; which Argument we must have wanted, if our Blessed Saviour had come so much sooner, as not to have been propheſied of so many Ages beforehand. And those who reject the Gospel now, would have thought they had had much more reason on their side than they can now pretend to have; for there had then been so much less means for their Conviction. So that the coming of our Saviour was defer'd, to give the greater Evidence, and the fuller Conviction of his being the Christ.

It would have been hard to believe, that the Son of God should come into the World with little or no notice given of it beforehand, and few or no Prophets sent to foretel his coming, and prepare his way. But when he had been so long before Propheſy'd of, even from the beginning of the World, thro' the several Ages of it, when there had been a general Expectation of the *Messiah* to be born, and the Time, and Place, and Tribe, and Family, and Person, of whom he was to be born, by degrees, and at several times had been foretold; when Mens hopes and desires to see him were thus from Age to Age awakened and alarmed, this was a Solemnity worthy to introduce and attend the Son of God into the World, and a Method which would

would prove a ſtanding Evidence of his being come into it.

3. The time of Chriſt's coming may depend upon things which we are uncapable of knowing. For it may depend upon the duration of the World; and it is impoſſible for any Man to know how long that ſhall be. The Scripture ſpeaks of the Times of the Goſpel under the Phraſe of the *laſt Days*, but this is to be underſtood in relation not to the continuance of the World, but to the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, which is the laſt means of Salvation that God will vouchſafe to Mankind, and with regard to the *Jewiſh* Church and Government, which was juſt then at an end, as I ſhall ſhew in the next Chapter.

Now if the World may continue as long under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel as it had done before it, (and no Man can tell but it may) we ſhall find little cauſe to wonder, that Chriſt was not ſooner born into the World. For we find, that the Faith and Zeal of Chriſtians decay, as we are at a farther diſtance of Time from the Incarnation of our Saviour, and the firſt propagation of his Goſpel; and the length of the Time it ſelf, proves a Temptation to ſome to disbelieve it: for Men are apt to give leſs credit to what happened long ago, and to think themſelves leſs concern'd in it. If therefore Chriſt had been born at the beginning of the World, how many more pretences would thoſe Men have feigned to themſelves for their Infidelity, who are now ſo prone to Unbelief, and ſo unwilling to be Chriſtians?

Men are tempted to ſuſpect, that there is ſomething of obſcurity and uncertainty in all things long ſince paſt; and if Chriſt had been born a thouſand or two thouſand Years ſooner, thoſe who now think he came too late, would then have cavilled that he came too ſoon, and that it was too long ago to be believed, and had happened in a dark and fabulous Age. And therefore it ſeems, that Chriſt came in the very ſeaſon

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and centre of time; that as the former Ages were not ſo remote as not to be capable of all the benefits of his Death and Paſſion to be in due time accompliſhed; ſo the laſt Ages of the World may have no pretence to queſtion the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, upon any account of the long diſtance of time ſince the Death of our Saviour and his Apoſtles. This may be the Caſe, for ought any Man can tell; or many other Reaſons there might be, much better and more important than this, to defer the Incarnation of our Saviour; and therefore it is an abſurd thing to raiſe Objections about it. Many Reaſons there might be for it, which we are uncapable of knowing; and it is ſufficient for us to know, that it was *in the Fulneſs of Time*, and that this time was the moſt proper and expedient, and therefore was the time appointed and determined by God from all Eternity.

4. God had, by the various Methods of his Providence, given ſuch ſignal opportunities to the *Gentiles*, to become acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, as did mightily prepare them for the acknowledgment of Chriſt at his coming into the World. All the Diſpenſations of the Divine Providence from the Beginning, had been as ſo many ſeveral preparations to the Birth of Chriſt; God choſe *Abraham* to be the Father of a peculiar People; and when that People had been, by the conſtant manifeſtation of a miraculous Providence, preſerv'd, and by their Laws and Ceremonies diſtinguiſh'd from all other People, they were driven into Captivity, as well in Mercy to other Nations, as by God's juſt Judgment upon them for their Sins, that by this means the *Gentiles* might be inſtructed in the Worſhip of the true God, and the Prophecies concerning Chriſt might become divulged, and all Nations might be in a readineſs to acknowledge and receive Him who was to be *the Deſire of all Nations*, and the Joy of all People. Firſt, the Ten Tribes were by *Shalmaneſer* carried away

away Captive, and then the two remaining Tribes by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and *Cyrus* was by name appointed to reſtore them. *Alexander*'s Conqueſts made yet way for a farther reception of the Prophecies, which were the moſt conſiderable about the time of the Captivity. And beſides the Prophecy of *Balaam*, by which the Wiſe Men were directed to find out Chriſt by the guidance of a Star, thoſe of *Iſaiah*, and *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*, muſt be well known in the Eaſt. The Bible had been about Three hundred Years before our Saviour's Birth, at the command of a Heathen Prince tranſlated into the *Greek* Tongue, which was by the Victories of *Alexander* become the moſt known Language in the World. And we read of no Revolution of Empires, no Bleſſing, no Affliction which befel the *Jews*, but it contributed in a remarkable manner to raiſe an expectation of Chriſt, and to prepare for his coming.

It is certain, that at the time of his Birth, there was among the *Jews* an univerſal Expectation of the *Meſſiah*, and that it was a receiv'd Opinion in that Age, all over the Eaſt, that a great Prince ſhould ariſe out of *Judea*; this appears both from the Scriptures, and from [a] Heathen Writers: the Wiſe Men came to enquire after him, and *Herod*'s Jealouſie proceeded to the utmoſt Rage and Cruelty, and could not have failed of ſucceſs, if it had been againſt any but the true *Meſſiah*, whom God did by an immediate Revelation deliver out of his hands. All the World ſtood in expectation of ſome extraordinary Perſon, and it was no unwelcome piece of Flattery to one of the *Roman* Emperors not long after, to have it reported, that he was the Prince ſpoken of and expected in the Eaſt, but it was eſteemed his Glory, and his Happineſs, to be thought the King that was to ariſe amongſt a deſpiſed and hated People. The expectation of Chriſt

[a] Sueton. in Veſpaſ. c. 4. Tacit. Hiſt. lib. v.

was

was ſo great, that he could not lie conceal'd in that obſcure and mean Condition, but was adored in a Manger, and receiv'd more than Royal Honours from the remoteſt Parts of the Earth. And in this reſpect it was *the Fulneſs of Time*, or the moſt convenient and proper time for Chriſt to appear, becauſe the Divine Providence had wonderfully diſpoſed and prepared the World for the expectation of him.

5. The particular temper and diſpoſition of the Age in which our Saviour was born, made it the moſt fitting and proper Age for him to be born in; for there were ſeveral things peculiar to that Age, which very much conduce to the proof of the certainty of his Religion. That Age was ſo remarkable, and the Hiſtory of it has been delivered down to us by ſo many eminent Writers, that it is more ſtudied, and generally better known than any Age of the World beſides; and it was fit that a thing of this nature and conſequence ſhould come to paſs in ſuch an Age, that it might be fully enquired into, in any Age afterwards, and that no diſtance of time might cauſe ſuch doubts concerning it, as ſhould ever render it the leſs certain to any, who are willing to acquaint themſelves with the truth of it.

If it had been an Impoſture, this ſurely had been the moſt unlikely time of any for it to ſucceed. No Prince could be more jealous than *Herod*, who was ſo enraged at the report of the Birth of Chriſt, that he too plainly ſhew'd how much he credited it. And no Age perhaps ſince the Creation, could be more unlikely to have a Cheat put upon it than this; in which, Peace, and Learning, and all polite Arts flouriſh'd, which refine Mens Underſtandings, and make them the moſt unfit and difficult to be impoſed upon. Policy was in its higheſt Perfection in the Courts of *Auguſtus* and *Tiberius*, which have been eſteemed the greateſt Patterns of it ever ſince; the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were in great Power and Authority at *Jeruſalem*,

lem, who were a ſubtle Generation of Men, and the worſt Enemies any one could have to deal withal. Vice, which was likely to give the greateſt hindrance to a holy Religion, was the faſhion of the Times; and that Empire was never ſo abandoned to Wickedneſs, as at the firſt propagation of the Goſpel. As Men were then moſt able to diſcover any Impoſture, ſo they muſt have been moſt unwilling to find the Chriſtian Religion true, which puts ſuch a check to all Licentiouſneſs, and to their beloved and long accuſtomed Vices. Vice would be ſure to make a ſtrong Defence, and an eager Plea; and nothing could be difficult for it to diſcover, when it had ſuch a number of ſuch ſubtle and devoted Advocates.

In this conjuncture of time, the Saviour of the World appears; and he appears in a mean and low Condition, deſpiſed by his own People, who ſoon became as much deſpiſed themſelves by all the World beſides. The Prince of Peace is born in a time of ſetled and univerſal Peace, when Men had moſt leiſure and opportunity to examine and conſider things; and when, by the Eſtabliſhment of the *Roman* Empire under *Auguſtus* in its full power and extent, there was an open and free Correſpondence between all Nations, and the Apoſtles and their Followers by this means might find a like admittance to preach the Goſpel in all Countries, but to be alike hated and perſecuted in all parts of the World. The Religion of Chriſt was not to make advantage of any Troubles and Confuſions in the Empire, as that of *Mahomet* afterwards did, but to recommend it ſelf by its own Worth and Efficacy to the moſt ſerious and impartial Minds; and under all theſe diſadvantages, it ſoon made its way into the Emperor's Court, where Craft, and Luxury, and every thing that is moſt contrary to the purity and ſimplicity of the Goſpel reigned. St. *Paul* had his Proſelytes in *Cæſar*'s *Houſhold*, and his *Bonds in Chriſt were manifeſt in all the Palace*,

and in all other places at *Rome*, Phil. i. 13. iv. 22. The truth of the Goſpel approved it ſelf to the moſt prejudiced Judgments, it ſtood all the Trials, and conquer'd all Oppoſition, that Wit, and Learning, and Vice it ſelf could make. For by the leave of the *Atheiſts* and *Deiſts* of our own Age, the Chriſtian Religion found the ſubtileſt and moſt dangerous Adverſaries at its firſt propagation. The *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks* encountred St. *Paul* at *Athens*; and theſe laſt, eſpecially, were inferiour to no other Sect of Philoſophers, either for their obſtinacy in adhering to their own Opinions, or for their art and skill in Diſputation. And it appears from the ſeveral Apologies made afterwards, in vindication of our Religion, that all was at the very firſt alledged againſt it, which can with any pretence or colour be objected.

Thus was Chriſt born in the Fulneſs of Time, when all the Prophecies concerning his coming were fulfilled, and when the World was in expectation of him, and had ſuch general notice of his coming; in a time the moſt unlikely for an Impoſture to paſs undiſcover'd, and therefore the moſt ſeaſonable for Truth to manifeſt it ſelf; ſince that muſt needs be true, which neither Learning, nor Prejudice, nor Vice, nor Intereſt, could prove to be falſe. The Accompliſhment of Prophecies, and the Converſion and Martyrdom of ſuch numbers of Men in ſuch an Age, recommends the Goſpel to us with all the Advantage which any juncture of Time could give.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the laſt Days; and of the laſt Day, or the Day of Judgment.

BY the *laſt Days*, in the Scriptures, muſt be meant either the laſt Days of the World, or the laſt Days of the *Jewiſh* State and Government, or the Days of the Goſpel Diſpenſation; which are the laſt Days in reſpect of the Means and Opportunities of Salvation vouchſafed to Mankind.

I. The laſt Days of the World are ſeldom mention'd directly, and in expreſs terms, but under ſuch Reſemblances as were fit to repreſent them in the Deſcription of other Events. For it was a known thing among the *Jews*, that their whole Diſpenſation being typical, whatever happened to them under their Law and Government, muſt afterwards be fulfilled in a more eminent manner under the Oeconomy and Diſpenſation of the *Meſſias*; and therefore the laſt Days of *Jeruſalem* muſt be typical of the laſt Days of the World. For the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, at the concluſion of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, was only a Type of the final Deſtruction of the World at the conſummation of all things, when Chriſt ſhall *deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*, 1 Cor. xv. 24. For which Reaſon the Diſciples joining theſe Two Queſtions together, *Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and, what ſhall be the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* Matth. xxiv. 3. our Saviour makes uſe of ſuch words as are applicable to both of theſe Events, and oftentimes more fitly to the laſt Judgment, that after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* it might appear, that the reſt remains ſtill to be accompliſhed at the Day of Judgment.

But there are likewiſe ſuch Expreſſions uſed, as evidently ſhew, that the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* is the thing immediately deſigned in the Prophecy. This will appear, if we conſider ſeveral Verſes of that Chapter. *Then let them which be in Judea, flee into the Mountains*, ver. 16. and that with the greateſt haſte; *for let him which is on the houſe-top not come down to take any thing out of his houſe*, ver. 17. *Neither let him which is in the field, return back to take his Cloaths*, ver. 18. But the Condition of ſuch would be very miſerable, who ſhould be unfit for Flight. *And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days*, ver. 19. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the Winter, neither on the Sabbath-day*, ver. 20. There will be no flying from the general deſtruction of the World, but the Diſciples are here warned to fly from the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and eſcape into the Mountains, and they are commanded to pray that their Flight might be hindred neither by the Seaſon of the Year, nor by the Sabbath, on which the *Jews* were permitted to travel but a very little way. Which ſuppoſes, that the World was to laſt after the Tribulation there ſpoken of; and that therefore the final deſtruction of this material World is not the thing there immediately meant. *And except thoſe Days ſhould be ſhortned, there ſhould no Fleſh be ſaved: but for the Elects ſake thoſe Days ſhall be ſhortned*, ver. 22. If this Deſtruction ſhould have raged long in that manner, no Man of the *Jews* could have ſurvived it, but it was to be ſo abated, and ſo ſoon over, that the converted *Jews* might be preſerved from it; which Promiſe was very remarkably and wonderfully fulfilled to the Chriſtians at the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, who made their eſcape into the Mountains, and retir'd to *Pella*. *For wheresoever the Carcaſs is, there will the Eagles be gathered together*, ver. 28. which is a plain Alluſion to the *Roman* Eagles, or the Standards of their Armies. *Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days ſhall the Sun be darkned,*

ned, and the Moon ſhall not give her Light, and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens ſhall be ſhaken, ver. 29. This was in ſome reſpect litterally fulfilled at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. But it is uſual with the Prophets, by theſe Figures, to deſcribe the Deſtruction of Nations: *They ſhall run to and fro in the City, they ſhall run upon the Wall, they ſhall climb up upon the Houſes, they ſhall enter in at the Windows like a Thief: The Earth ſhall quake before them, the Heavens ſhall tremble, the Sun and the Moon ſhall be dark, and the Stars ſhall withdraw their ſhining*, Joel ii. 9, 10. This is a Deſcription of the great Terrors which the Enemies of *Zion* ſhould bring upon her. And the falſe Teachers are ſtyl'd by St. *Jude*, ver. 13. *wandring Stars*, becauſe the true were as the Sun and fix'd Stars. *The Seven Stars are the Angels* (or Biſhops) *of the ſeven Churches*, Rev. i. 20. Our Saviour himſelf is ſtyled, the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, Malach. iv. 2. and *the bright and morning Star*, Rev. xxii. 16. *Balaam* propheſy'd, that a Star ſhould *come out of Jacob, and a Scepter ſhould riſe out of Iſrael*, Num. xxiv. 17. and that Impoſtor in the time of *Adrian*, who pretended to be the *Meſſias*, called himſelf *Barchochebas*, or the Son of a Star. So that by the darkning of the Sun and Moon, and the falling of the Stars from Heaven, by an uſual Metaphor, was meant the failing of the *Jewiſh* State and Government. This is agreeable to what [a] *Maimonides* relates, of the Form of Speech uſual with the *Arabians*, when they would expreſs ſome great Calamity, into which any Man was fallen;

[a] Quando enim vaticinatur (Iſaias) de Gentis alicujus deſtructione, vel de Populi alicujus magni interitu ait Stellas cecidiſſe, cœlos interiiſſe, & contremiſcere, ſolem obtenebratum, terram vaſtatam & commotam eſſe, aliiſque multis ſimilibus locutionibus Parabolicis utitur; ſicut apud Arabes de eo, cui ſingulare aliquod infortunium accidit, dicitur, quòd cœlum ipſius in terram converſum ſit, vel ſuper terram ejus ceciderit. Maimon. More Nevoch. Part. 2. c. 29. Conſuevit enim de regno aliquo loqui ac ſi eſſet mundus peculiaris, hoc eſt, cœlum & terra, Ib.

they were wont to ſay, his Heaven was fallen to the Earth. *And then ſhall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then ſhall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory*, ver. 30. Theſe Expreſſions have a plain Reference to the Day of Judgment; but the *Son of Man* is deſcribed in *Daniel*, as *coming in the Clouds of Heaven* to receive Dominion, and eſtabliſh his Kingdom over all Nations, *Dan.* vii. 13, 14. And by the Appearance of the *Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven*, ſeems to be meant the Eſtabliſhment of this Kingdom, by the viſible Profeſſion of the Goſpel, which, after the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip, became more apparent to the World, who before made little Diſtinction between Chriſtians and Jews. And *the Angels of the Churches* (Rev. i. 20.) the Meſſengers of Chriſt, and Preachers of his Goſpel, were ſent all over the World to convert the Gentiles, *and gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from the one end of Heaven to the other*, ver. 31. *Verily I ſay unto you, this generation ſhall not paſs till all theſe things be fulfilled*; that is, till they be accompliſh'd in their firſt and immediate Senſe in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was deſtroy'd forty years after. But as the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* was a Type and Repreſentation, as it were, of the Deſtruction of the World: ſo there is a remoter Accompliſhment, in which they will be more literally fulfill'd at the Day of Judgment.

II. Theſe were therefore properly the laſt days of the City and Government of the *Jews*, who were wont to call the [b] Coming of the *Meſſias* the *New Creation*, according to the Prophet, *Iſai.* lxv. 17. lxvi. 22. and the *world to come*; whereupon, in their account, the time immediately foregoing muſt be the laſt days of the former World. And thus the Apoſtle ſpeaks,

[b] Ligtf. *Harm. of the* N. T. §. ix.

they

they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. x. 11. which may be as truly rendred, upon whom the ends of the Times or Ages are come; for ſo the Word there uſed ſignifies. The World had now continued about four thouſand years, and this was the End or Concluſion of the Ages, when a new Period of Time was to begin. And the ſame Apoſtle ſhewing, that Chriſt is not like the Jewiſh High-Prieſts, *for then muſt he often have ſuffered, ſince the foundation of the World*, adds, *but now once in the end of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, Heb. ix. 26. where, tho' in our Tranſlation the Word *World* be twice uſed, yet in the Original it is expreſs'd by two different Words, the firſt ſignifying the viſible and material World, but the latter ſignifying *Ages*, to teach us that Chriſt appear'd to ſuffer for us in the end of the Ages, not in the end of this material World. For the Apoſtle would have uſed the ſame Word, if he had meant the ſame thing in both places, and would never have made ſo ſudden a Change of Words to no purpoſe.

The laſt Days, which the Prophet *Joel* foretold, and for which he is quoted by St. *Peter*, Acts ii. 16. are the laſt days of the *Jewiſh* State and Government, which was ſhortly to receive its final Period; the *Jewiſh* Law and Power was then near its end, and the days or times juſt before its Concluſion and ultimate Period was the Space granted the *Jews* for their Converſion, before the Deſtruction of their City and Nation; and theſe were the laſt days of their Diſpenſation, and the laſt Opportunity that was to be afforded them, as a diſtinct and peculiar People.

III. The Scripture ſpeaks of the times of the Goſpel as the laſt days; which is to be underſtood, not with reſpect to the Duration of time, but to the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel; it is the laſt Diſpenſation which God will vouchſafe to Mankind, the laſt means and opportunity of Salvation which will be granted to

the World, and it is propheſy'd of under the Character of the laſt days, *Iſai.* ii. 2. *Micah* iv. 1, 2. For the Opportunity and Time allotted for the means of Salvation, is wont to be ſtyled the Day of Salvation. *If thou hadſt known, even thou at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes*, Luke xix. 42. *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*, Heb. iii. 7, 15. iv. 7. *For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the Day of Salvation have I ſuccoured thee; behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the Day of Salvation*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 2. *Iſai.* xlix. 8. So that by *Day* is ſignify'd Seaſon or Opportunity, in the Language of Scripture, as *Night* is put to ſignify the contrary. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is Day, the Night cometh, when no Man can work*, John ix. 4.

The Scriptures herein conſider the Continuance and Duration of the World no otherwiſe than with relation to the Diſpenſations which God has been pleas'd to afford Men, in order to their Salvation; and in this reſpect the time under the Goſpel is the *laſt Days*, though it be of never ſo long Duration; becauſe the Goſpel is the laſt Diſpenſation. The laſt Age of the World is the Age under the Goſpel, whether it be longer or ſhorter than the reſt, and the whole Duration of this Age is ſtyled the laſt Days, ſince by *Days* is not to be underſtood the Length or Continuance of any certain time, but the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and the time under the Goſpel is the *laſt Days*; not becauſe the World then began to draw towards its Period or Diſſolution, but becauſe the Goſpel offers us the laſt Opportunity of Salvation, and is the Concluſion and Period, and the final Conſummation of the Grace and Goodneſs of God extended towards Mankind. The Goſpel being the laſt means of Salvation offer'd to Mankind, the whole time under it is therefore ſometimes ſtyled the *laſt Days*, the laſt Diſtinction of Times, the laſt Seaſon and Opportunity to be expected.

expected. The Duration of the World is conſider'd in the Scriptures, with relation to Chriſt's Coming, and all the Time after his Coming is ſtyled the *laſt Days*; as in the Deſcription of the different ſtates of *Job*'s Life, the ſpace of an hundred and forty years of it, after his Sufferings, is ſtyled the *latter end* of his Life; and all the precedent part is term'd the *Beginning* of it, *Job* xlii. 12, 16.

IV. The Day of Judgment being purpoſely conceal'd both from Men and Angels to keep us in a continual Watchfulneſs and Expectation of it, the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſpeaks of it, as that which as to the time of it is uncertain, and therefore is at all times to be expected. And this gave occaſion to ſome to miſtake his Meaning, tho' there is nothing in his Words which implies that the Day of Judgment was then approaching. *For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep. Then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 15, 17. ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες, οἱ περιλειπόμενοι, we *the living*, *the remaining*, that is, the faithful which ſhall then be alive and remain upon the Earth. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the Faithful here under a twofold Denomination, *viz.* of the *Dead* and the *Living*, and ſpeaking of the Living he uſes the firſt Perſon Plural; as being himſelf yet in the number of the Living; not that he ſhould be of that number at the Day of Judgment.

Thus frequent [c] Examples are to be found, where Hiſtorians relating matters of Fact which happen'd long before their own Times, uſe the Expreſſions of *we* and *our*; We fought, Our Army conquer'd; that

[c] Tollit animos (Tullus Hoſtilius) quaſi ipſe mandâſſet, ſpes inde noſtris, metus hoſtibus, Flor. l. i. c. 3. —— Stipendiariam nobis Provinciam fecit (Scipio Africanus) Hiſpaniam, l. ii. c. 17. Creticum Bellum, ſi vera volumus noſcere, nos fecimus, l. iii. c. 7.

is,

is, the People of which I am now a Member, or the Army of this People. We (the *Engliſh*) conquer'd *France* in the Reign of King *Henry* V. and if this had been propheſy'd of, it might have been ſaid, we ſhall conquer, *&c.* Our Saviour ſpeaking to the *Jews*, ſays, *Moſes gave you not that bread from Heaven*, when they had told him before, *our Fathers did eat Manna in the Deſart*, John vi. 31, 32. And it might as well have been ſaid to the Patriarchs, you ſhall eat Manna in the Wilderneſs, as to the Jews of our Saviour's time, you did eat it. The Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, as if he had been preſent at the Paſſage of the Children of *Iſrael* through the *Red Sea*, and the River *Jordan*: *He turned the Sea into dry Land: they went through the flood on foot: there did We rejoice in him*, Pſal. lxvi. 6. And the Prophet *Hoſea*, as if he had been with *Jacob*, when he met the Angel, ſays, the Angel *found him in Bethel, and there he ſpake with us*, Hoſ. xii. 4. And this was the conſtant manner of Speech, in the Form of Confeſſion, which was appointed to be uſed by all, when they offer'd their Firſt-fruits, *The Lord brought us forth out of Ægypt with a mighty hand*, Deut. xvi. 8.

And a Prophet foretelling things to come to paſs after his own Death, might as well ſay, We ſhall do ſo and ſo, that is, thoſe of this Nation and People ſhall do it, to which I belong; and therefore reckon my ſelf in the number, though I can have no ſhare in the Action, nor live to ſee it. *Jacob* commands his Sons, *gather your ſelves together, that I may tell you, that which ſhall befal you in the laſt days*, Gen. xlix. 1. when he foretold what was to befal their Poſterity in the Ages to come. And *Moſes* foretelling what Judgments were to be inflicted upon future Generations for their Diſobedience, thus beſpeaks thoſe of his own Time, *when thou art in Tribulation, and all theſe things are come upon thee, even in the latter days*, Deut. iv. 30. In the ſame manner St. *Paul* ſays, *we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed*, 1 Cor. xv. 51. *We*,

that

that is, the Living; for not being yet in the number of the Dead, he reckon'd himſelf amongſt the preſent and future Living. As when he writes to the *Epheſians*, *among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our Fleſh, fulfilling the Deſires of the Fleſh and of the Mind, and were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others*, (Epheſ. ii. 3.) it is paraphras'd by Dr. *Hammond* thus, *among whom we of the Gentile Church of* Rome, *from whence I write, formerly lived*, &c. This Apoſtle, who ſo often declares himſelf an *Iſraelite*, and a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, yet ſometimes numbers himſelf among the *Gentiles: Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles*, Rom. ix. 24. The Church conſiſting both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, of *Dead* and *Living*, he writes, as a Fellow-Member *not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles*, not only of the *Dead*, but alſo of thoſe, who ſhould be *Alive* at the laſt day. It is certain St. *Paul* expected his own Death, 2 *Tim.* iv. 6. but it is uſual with him to ſpeak in his own Perſon by a Figure, and ſometimes even when he mentions himſelf by Name, 1 *Cor.* iv. 6. and he expreſly declares that he did neither by *word* nor *letter* ſignify *that the Day of Chriſt was at hand*, (2 Theſſ. ii. 2.) to prevent or remove any Miſunderſtanding of his Firſt Epiſtle. St. *Peter* ſpeaking of the *laſt days*, gives particular Caution, that the Chriſtians of thoſe times ſhould not conclude, that the End of the World was then approaching: *But, Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord, as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day*, 2 Pet. iii. 8. He admoniſhes them to take ſpecial heed not to be deceiv'd, as if the End of the World muſt neceſſarily have been near, becauſe thoſe were the *laſt Days*. For a thouſand years are no more than a day in God's account, and according to that Eſtimation of Time, which the Scriptures make. And he farther warns them not to wreſt St. *Paul*'s Words in this caſe, as if he had taught any other thing,

thing, than what himſelf now wrote to them, *ver.* 16. We read indeed, [d] *the end of all things is at hand*, 1 Pet. iv. 7. But I preſume this ought to be underſtood of *Perſons* not of *Things*. St. *Peter* ſpeaks of the End of every one's Life, by reaſon of the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of it. For this is moſt agreeable both to his Second Epiſtle, and to the Context of this Chapter. *Foraſmuch as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the Fleſh*, he exhorts Chriſtians to *live no longer in the Luſts of it: For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, who ſhall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cauſe was the Goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to Men in the Fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit:* And then it follows naturally, *But the End or Death of all Men is at hand! Be ye ſober therefore, and watch unto Prayer.*

We at this diſtance of Time may be ſufficiently aſſured by the Event, that the Apoſtles were not ſo to be underſtood, as if they had taught, that the Day of Judgment would certainly overtake thoſe, who were then living: But it was order'd by the wiſe Providence of God, that they ſhould make expreſs Declaration, that this was not their Meaning; leſt an Advantage ſhould have been taken by ſuch, as *deſire an occaſion*, in theſe days, ſo much later than thoſe, which were ſo long ſince call'd the *laſt Days*. The preciſe time of Chriſt's Coming to Judgment, was conceal'd not only from the Apoſtles, but from the Angels, and even from the Son himſelf, in reſpect of his Humane Nature, (*Mark* xiii. 32.) for which reaſon the Apoſtles ſpeak of it, as a thing which might poſſibly be in that Age: They determine nothing concerning the Time, for it was not then reveal'd to them; but exhort all Men to live in a conſtant Preparation for it, according to the frequent Warning given by our Bleſ-

[d] Πάντων ἤγγικε τὸ τέλος.

ſed

ſed Saviour: *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is,* (Mark xiii. 33.) Tho' in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, St. *Paul* plainly intimates, that the World was to continue for divers Ages. *God*, ſays he, *hath raiſed us up together,* ——— *that in the Ages to come, he might ſhew the exceeding Riches of his Graces,* (Epheſ. ii. 7.) which could not be ſaid by one, who expected that the World would certainly not out-laſt the preſent Age.

V. The Day of Judgment is deſcrib'd with ſo much Solemnity, and ſo many Particulars, that it may ſeem impoſſible for them all to be diſpatched in the compaſs not only of one, but of many Days. But the [e] *Jews*, from whom our Saviour and his Apoſtles took the Expreſſion of *the Day of Judgment*, underſtood by it a time of many Years continuance, and ſometimes the term even of a thouſand Years. And by *Day*, in the Language of the Scriptures, is to be underſtood *Seaſon*, or any period and diſtinction of Time, with reſpect to ſome particular thing or occaſion; as *theſe are the Generations of the Heavens, and of the Earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the Earth and the Heavens*, Gen. ii. 4. that is, in the time conſiſting of ſix days; *the day of temptation in the Wilderneſs* was *forty Years*, Heb. iii. 8, 9. Nay, St. *Peter* uſes it to expreſs eternal Duration, *to him be Glory*, ſays he, *both now and for ever*, which in the Original is, both now, and to the Day of Eternity, 2 *Pet.* iii. 18. *Day* is us'd for Judgment it ſelf, 1 *Cor.* iv. 3. and [f] ſo the *Jews* underſtood *Days* to be meant, *Job* xxiv. 1. In our Language, *Days-man* ſignifies Judge or Umpire, *Job* ix. 33. and *Diem dicere* was the Law-term amongſt the *Romans* for the Summons to a Tryal; but it doth not follow from thence, that the Cauſe muſt needs have been decided upon the ſame Day,

[e] Mede, *Epiſt.* xx. [f] Grot. ad 1 Cor. iv. 3.

which

which was appointed for the hearing it. [g] *Tully* by *Day*, in his firſt Oration againſt *Verres*, means the ſpace of at leaſt Fifty Days. There is no reaſon then to ſuppoſe, that the laſt Judgment muſt be confined to one or more Days; but it will take up as much time as the Solemnity of the Proceedings requires.

——— *Hunc diem Judicii ultimum diem dicimus, id eſt, noviſſimum Tempus. Nam per quot dies hoc judicium tendatur, incertum eſt: ſed ſcripturarum more ſanctarum diem poni ſolere pro tempore, nemo qui literas illas quamlibet negligenter legerit, neſcit.* Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. XX. c. 1.

CHAP. XXV.

Of Sacraments.

THO' the *Jewiſh* Law was very requiſite at that time, and for that People, when it was in force, and the wiſeſt and beſt Inſtitution that could have been, yet it was indeed a Yoke, and ſuch a Yoke as was burthenſom, and not to have been born, but in ſure hopes and expectation of better things to come. And at the approach of the Sun of Righteouſneſs theſe Shadows vaniſhed, and the Types having attained their end and accompliſhment, were laid aſide; and in their room, Chriſt has inſtituted as few Rites as it was poſſible; only the two Sacraments; one for Initiation and firſt Reception, and the other for our

[g] Itaque cum ego diem in Siciliam inquirendi perexiguam poſtulâſſem, invenit iſte, qui ſibi in Achaiam biduo breviorem diem poſtularet: non ut is idem conficeret diligentiâ, & induſtriâ ſuâ, quod ego meo labore & vigiliis conſecutus ſum. Etenim ille Achaicus inquiſitor, ne Brundiſium quidem pervenit. Ego Siciliam totam quinquaginta diebus ſic obii, ut omnium populorum, privatorumque literas injuriaſque cognoſcerem. Cic. in Ver. Orat. i.

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Re-eſtabliſhment and Confirmation in that Covenant, which he has been pleas'd to make with us. And yet even theſe are thought too many by ſome, who, as if they were all Soul and Spirit without Body, are only for a mental and ſpiritual Worſhip. To vindicate therefore the Inſtitution and Uſe of Sacraments, I ſhall, *Firſt*, conſider the Nature and Deſign of Sacraments in general; *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew how fully the two Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper anſwer the End and Deſign of the Inſtitution of Sacraments.

I. I will enquire into the Nature and Deſign of Sacraments in general. Sacraments may be conſider'd, either, 1. As outward and viſible Signs of our entrance into Covenant with God, or of our renewing our Covenant with him. Or, 2. As Pledges of God's Grace and Favour towards us. Or, 3. As the Means and Inſtruments, whereby he is pleas'd to convey into our Souls the bleſſed Influences of his Holy Spirit. Or, laſtly, they may be conſider'd as viſible Rites, whereby we are admitted into the viſible Society of Chriſt's Church, or profeſs our Communion with it. And in all theſe reſpects it will appear, how beneficial and requiſite the Inſtitution of Sacraments is, and how fitting it is that God in his Diſpenſations with Men ſhould appoint ſomething outward and viſible to be done, or received by them.

I. Ceremonies and Rites of Initiation and of Worſhip, have been inſtituted in all Religions, which is Evidence ſufficient, that the Nature of Man requires them, and that our Worſhip cannot be wholly mental and ſpiritual. And God is pleas'd in his Dealings with Mankind, to condeſcend to their Capacities, to aſcribe to himſelf their Paſſions, to allude to their Cuſtoms, and to make uſe of ſuch Means and Methods as Men are accuſtomed to in their Dealings with one another. He beſt underſtands humane Nature, and knows all the diſpoſitions and tendencies of it; *he knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are duſt*, Pſal.

Pſal. ciii. 14. He conſiders that we are Fleſh as well as Spirit; he fully comprehends the ſtrict Union between the Soul and the Body, and the cauſe and manner of it, and how great influence the one hath upon the other in their ſeveral Operations; he planted in us all our Powers and Faculties, and ſees all their Motions and Inclinations, the ſecret Springs of Action and Paſſion, and has accordingly fitted and proportioned the Inſtitution of his Laws and Ordinances.

We ſee among Men, that they are not content only to underſtand one another's Meaning, or to expreſs their Minds in words, tho' they be the moſt ſolemn and ſignificant; but are wont to uſe ſome Ceremony and Solemnity of Action and Circumſtances in matters of great importance; becauſe this makes greater impreſſion upon the Mind, and lays upon it a more forcible and laſting engagement by taking in the Senſes and Paſſions, as Parties concerned with it; and this is by experience found to have the beſt effect to all the ends and purpoſes of Agreement and Obligation between Men. Oaths themſelves are not found to be ſo ſecure to be rely'd upon, when they are only pronounc'd, as when they are taken with ſuch Circumſtances of Words and Geſture, as may create an awe and reverence in thoſe who take them. For the manner and circumſtances in which any Action is done, raiſe and fix the Attention, and expreſs the Mind and Deſign of the Doer, and are better retain'd in the Memory, and work more upon the Will and Affections, than the Action of it ſelf can do. This Orators very well underſtand; for the Art of Rhetorick is almoſt nothing elſe but a skilful management of the circumſtances of Actions to the advantage of a Cauſe. And Philoſophy informs us, that the evil or goodneſs of Actions depends chiefly upon their Circumſtances; from whence we learn what the intention of the Mind is, and to what degree of Reſolution it came in the performance of any Action. If an Action be perform-

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ed at a ſolemn time and place, in the preſence of Witneſſes met together for that very purpoſe, upon great deliberation; with ſuch Words and Geſtures as are very ſignificant to expreſs our full Deſign and Intention; all theſe Circumſtances conſider'd, make it much more our own proper Act and Deed than if it were done without them, tho' the Intention were the ſame. For what we declare before others to be our mind and purpoſe to do, or undertake, we cannot but think our ſelves bound to, under more Obligations than if we barely deſign'd it, or promis'd it only to the Perſons concern'd; becauſe the deſign of declaring it, is to lay upon our ſelves a farther Obligation to perform it, and to call others as Witneſſes againſt us, if we neglect the performance of it; and ſince our Reſolution may be declar'd as well by Actions as by Words; he that expreſſes his Reſolution both theſe ways, ſhews a farther deſign to oblige himſelf, than if he ſhould only uſe words to expreſs it; and if the Circumſtances of Actions be ſtated, and ſolemn and ſignificant, then all the ways and means concur, by which it is poſſible for Men to declare and expreſs their Minds in any caſe, and to oblige themſelves to the performance of any Covenant.

Now Sacraments are the Seals of the Covenant between God and Man; and when God is pleas'd to receive Men into Covenant with himſelf, it is requiſite that Men ſhould not barely give their aſſent to the Terms and Conditions of it, and declare that they will undertake them; but it is farther neceſſary, that this ſhould be done with all the Solemnity of Words and Actions that may engage them to the performance of it, and render them inexcuſable if they tranſgreſs it; it is fitting it ſhould be entred into, and renewed in the preſence of Witneſſes, that the Words ſhould be ſolemn, and the Actions ſignificant, and that nothing ſhould be wanting which may teſtifie the Sincerity, and ſecure the Fidelity of the Under-

takers. For if Covenants between Man and Man be made with all the formality of Witnesses, and Hands and Seals, and Delivery in solemn and express words; if Men know themselves too well to trust one another without all this Solemnity, it may well be expected, that when God is pleas'd to permit them to enter into Covenant with himself, he should not receive them under less obligations of Caution and Security for their Integrity, than Men are wont to use amongst themselves. For every breach of Covenant with him, is infinitely more affronting and sinful than any breach of Covenant with Man can be; and therefore God, who will not be mocked, has appointed the most effectual Means to secure his Laws from contempt; he knows the deceitfulness of Man's Heart, how perverse and stubborn it is, especially in things of such a Nature as these are of, to which Men are obliged by that Promise and Vow that they are required to make to him; and that all the Restraints and all the Remembrances which Words or Actions can afford, are little enough to keep Men in any tolerable measure to their Duty.

God was pleas'd to confirm his Promise to *Abraham* with an Oath; and therein shew'd himself willing to give all the assurance that the most incredulous Man can desire, of the fix'd and unalterable stedfastness of his purpose, and the *immutability of his Counsel, that we might have a strong Consolation*, Heb. vi. 17, 18. And when God himself is pleas'd so far to condescend, for our comfort and satisfaction, it is most reasonable that he should oblige us to perform our part of the Covenant, by all the ways that may put us in remembrance of our Duty, and make us faithful and constant in the performance of it. And this could be effected by no better Means, than by outward Acts and visible Signs to testifie and profess in the most serious and solemn manner, what our inward Faith and Resolutions are. This is that sort of secu-

rity which Men have of one another, and when God makes a Covenant with Men, he conſiders them as Men; that is, he appoints ſuch Solemnities of it as have reſpect to the Body as well as to the Soul; he doth not deal with us as with immaterial Spirits, but as with Creatures conſiſting of Soul and Body, and who little regard, and are little affected with that which doth not ſome way concern the one as well as the other.

And it is ſtrange to ſee to what Extravagancies thoſe have proceeded, who have ſet up for a purely ſpiritual Worſhip, without any thing Sacramental for a viſible Sign in it. For not to mention the Pretenſions of our *Enthuſiaſts*, who by decrying the uſe and neceſſity of Sacraments, have made Religion nothing but an empty and uncertain Name amongſt them. *Porphyry*, who was a Man of Study and Learning, after he had Apoſtatiz'd from the Chriſtian Religion, upon a ridiculous Occaſion, as [a] Hiſtory relates it, was aſhamed to return to the Heathen Idolatry, which after the appearance of Chriſtianity in the World, ſoon became too notoriouſly abſurd and abominable for any Man pretending ſo much to Reaſon and good Senſe to own it; but he placed all Divine Worſhip in mental Prayer, and ſo far rejected all outward and bodily Worſhip, [b] that he pretended the Prayers of Men were polluted and defiled by any thing of that nature, and rendred unacceptable to the Deity; and that they never were ſufficiently pure and perfect, if they were expreſs'd by the Voice, but were then in their higheſt degree of Perfection, when they were all Contemplation, and Rapture, and Extaſie. And the very ſame Notions were taught by [c] *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and have been revived of late by ſuch as under-

[a] Euſeb. apud Socrat. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 23.
[b] Porphyr. de Abſtinent. lib. 2. §. 34.
[c] Euſeb. Præpar. Evang. lib. iv. c. 13.

value all outward Ordinances, which may be a Warning to others, and an Evidence of the Divine Wisdom in appointing Sacraments as outward and visible Signs of our Covenant and Communion with God.

2. As these outward Signs serve to raise our Attention and fix our Minds, and to put us in remembrance, that Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, are witnesses against us, if we prove treacherous and unfaithful in this Covenant; so they are as Tokens and Pledges to us of God's Love and Favour, and of his merciful and gracious Intentions towards us, in taking us into Covenant with himself; they give us sensible and visible Assurances of that Grace, which is invisible and spiritual. And this seems but necessary for Creatures that are led so much by Sense, as we all are in this Life, that God, together with his Word and Promises, should besides appoint something which may be perceiv'd by our bodily Senses, in token of those Blessings which are bestow'd upon the Soul, that what is no Object of Sense, may yet be represented and signified by something that is sensible; to bring, as far as it is possible, the most divine and heavenly Things down to our very Senses; which may be a Sign and Token of present Grace and Favour, and a Pledge and Earnest of future Glory and Happiness. And this is what is found very useful and necessary amongst Men, who are better contented with something present, and in hand, tho' of little value, and insignificant in it self, as a Token and Pledge of what is promised and made over to them, than they are with the greatest Promises and Protestations without any thing as an Earnest to confirm them; because this is a natural Evidence, that they are indeed in *earnest*, (as our *English* word expresses it) and really intend what they say, and it may be produced against them, if they should fail of Performance. Now what is inward and invisible, is absent as to Sense; and what is future, has need of something present, to represent it

to us: And God who was pleas'd to bind himself even by an Oath for our farther Comfort and Trust in him; has been pleas'd likewise, that he might be wanting in nothing, which might help our Infirmities, and assist our Faith; he has been pleas'd in Condescension to the Condition and Frailty of Humane Nature, to appoint visible Signs and Pledges of that which is Invisible, and to give all the Assurance to our very Senses that they are capable of, that all the Promises of his Spiritual Blessings and Graces shall as certainly be fulfill'd to us, as the outward Signs and Pledges are appointed for us, and duly received by us.

3. Sacraments are not only Signs and Tokens of Spiritual Gifts and Graces, but they are ordain'd as Means and Instruments of Grace and Salvation to us, that as the Body partakes in the Moral Actions of Virtue and Vice, so it might concur in the Religious Acts ordain'd for our Sanctification. For God, who has made us so as to consist of Soul and Body, and to have the Vital Union between Soul and Body depend upon a fit Disposition of the Body, and to be maintain'd by the Health and Nourishment of it, has been pleas'd to appoint certain Bodily Actions as the Means and Instruments of our Spiritual Life, that the Soul might not, even in this Case, where it self is more immediately concern'd, be wholly independent of the Body; but that since both must be either happy or miserable together in the next Life, both might concur in the way and means of Salvation in this; yet so as that the Soul should be the first and principal Agent, and the Body should act only in Subordination and Subserviency to it in this, as it doth in other Cases; that as in Moral Actions the Soul acts virtuously or viciously by the Body; so in Spiritual Actions the Soul might receive Advantage and Benefit by Bodily Acts, and be deprived of it upon the Omission or Neglect of such Acts.

The Body without the Soul is not the Man, nor the Soul without the Body, but both Soul and Body together, and the whole Man becomes dedicated and conſecrated to God's Worſhip and Service in the uſe of Actions perform'd outwardly in the Body. And it is requiſite that the Body, as well as the Soul, ſhould be thus dedicated to God in token of the Reſurrection of the Body, and of that Happineſs which it muſt receive in Heaven, if the Soul be happy. St. *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* to *glorifie God in their Body, as well as in their Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. he tells them, that *the Body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the Body: know ye not*, ſays he, *that your Bodies are the Members of Chriſt? what? know ye not, that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt?* There have been thoſe in ſeveral Ages, who have made ſuch high Pretences to Spiritual Worſhip, that they would allow the Body no part or ſhare in it; and others, from the great Irregularity and Corruption which they could not but obſerve in their Carnal Appetites, have concluded that the Body was made not by God, but by a wicked Being, and that the Soul only was from God. Since therefore God is pleas'd to regard our Bodies as Members of Chriſt, and Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, it was requiſite, that in contradiction to theſe, and ſuch like Errors, they ſhould by ſome Rite or Sign be devoted to him, by which it might be declared, that *Chriſt* is *the Saviour of the Body*, Epheſ. v. 23. and by which ſuch Grace might be communicated, as to render it the Temple and place of Reſidence of the Holy Ghoſt, ſet apart and dedicated to him, and inhabited by him, that *the whole Spirit and Soul and Body may be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. It is the great and gracious Deſign of God to ſanctify the whole Man, and therefore Chriſt took not only an Humane Soul, but Humane Fleſh likewiſe, to dignify it in the Aſſumption, and offer it upon the Croſs, and tranſlate it into Glo-

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ry. And as his Incarnation ſhews the particular Regard he has for the Body as well as for the Soul of Man, ſo the whole Inſtitution of the Goſpel hath relation to both.

4. Laſtly, The Sacraments are Fœderal Rites of our Admiſſion into the Church, as into a viſible Society, and of our Union with it as ſuch. For we cannot be admitted into a viſible Society, nor communicate with it, but by viſible and outward Acts, which muſt be perform'd in the Body.

So that whatever way we conſider the Sacraments, either in reſpect of God, or of our ſelves, or of others, there is a neceſſary uſe and benefit from them, and evident Reaſon for their Inſtitution. They are requiſite as Symbols of our Entrance into Covenant with God, or of the Renewing and Confirmation of it, and of dedicating both our Bodies and Souls to his Honour and Service; they are Inſtruments of his Graces, and Pledges of his Promiſes made to us by Covenant, and of the Reward and Happineſs both of our Bodies and Souls at the Reſurrection; and are viſible Marks and Evidences of our Profeſſion, as Members of the Church, of our Admiſſion into it, and our Communion with it.

II. The Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper fully anſwer the End and Deſign of the Inſtitution of Sacraments. After the Coming of Chriſt, and the fulfilling of the Ceremonial Law by him, it was of no longer uſe or continuance, the Goſpel being to introduce a Spiritual Service, by teaching Men to *worſhip God in Spirit and in Truth:* Yet there was need of ſome external Ordinances or Sacraments, the Nature of Man, and the State of this World requiring them; but that they might be as few as poſſible, Chriſt has appointed but two Sacraments *as generally neceſſary to Salvation*, and theſe the fitteſt and moſt expedient for the benefit and wants of Men.

1. As to Baptiſm, the Reaſons and Deſigns in the Inſtitution of Sacraments are all viſible in it. It is a very ſignificant and apt Repreſentation of the cleanſing and purifying the Soul from Sin, and in this Men of all Nations and of all Religions ſeem to have been agreed. For nothing was more frequent among the *Heathens* than their Waſhings and Purifications; and though they attributed a great deal too much to them, yet the ſuperſtitious Opinion which they had of theſe outward Cleanſings, could never have ſo univerſally prevail'd, if there had not been ſome Foundation for the uſe of them in the Nature of Things, and that is the great Fitneſs which is in theſe outward Waſhings to excite us to Purity of Mind, and to repreſent the great Duty which lies upon us, to keep our Conſciences undefiled, which only can render us accepted with God.

And as theſe Waſhings and Purifications were common in other Religions, ſo the *Jewiſh* Church was wont to receive Proſelytes or Converts by Baptiſm; for which Cuſtom they alledge the Command of God to *Moſes*, Exod. xix. 10. but [d] Dr. *Lightfoot* ſets it higher, and thinks it was begun by *Jacob*, Gen. xxxv. 2. And our Saviour, who both in his Words and Actions throughout the whole Goſpel, condeſcended to a Compliance with the Cuſtoms in uſe among the *Jews* ſo far as they might be ſerviceable to the ends of the Goſpel, was pleas'd to make choice of Baptiſm for the Admiſſion of Perſons to the Profeſſion of his Religion, as the *Jews* uſed it for the Admiſſion of their Proſelytes.

Baptiſm is very agreeable to the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion, being a plain and eaſy Rite, and having a natural Significancy of that Purity of Heart, which it is the Deſign of the Goſpel to promote and eſtabliſh in the World; and it is fitted to repreſent to

[d] Hebr. *and* Talmud *Exercit. on* Matt. iii. 6.

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us the cleanſing of our Souls by the Blood of Chriſt, and the Grace of Purity and Holineſs, which is convey'd in this Sacrament, and the Spirit of Regeneration which is conferr'd by it, *John* iii. 5. *Tit.* iii. 5. And it being in uſe both amongſt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, it was ſo much the more proper, becauſe both had already an Opinion of the Expediency of it. Chriſt came to aboliſh the Ceremonies of the *Jewiſh* Law, and the vain and idolatrous Superſtitions of the *Heathen* Worſhip, and yet ſome outward Rite of Worſhip was neceſſary to be made uſe of, to dedicate the Body as well as the Soul to God's Honour and Service, to be a Pledge of the Reſurrection of the Body, as well as of the Immortality of the Soul, to put Men in mind of that Integrity and Purity of Life which the Goſpel requires, and to be a means of conveying it, and to admit them as viſible Members into the Church. And as Baptiſm was very expedient to be inſtituted upon all theſe accounts; ſo it had this peculiar Advantage beyond any other Rite, that it was already in great uſe and eſteem, and could ſeem ſtrange neither to *Jews* nor *Gentiles*; but it had been a very ſtrange thing to both, and very unſuitable to the Nature of Man, if the moſt Spiritual and Heavenly Religion, that can be, on this ſide Heaven, had been inſtituted without any external Rite for the Admiſſion into it; this had been to ſuppoſe the Church to conſiſt of Angels and not of Men, who have need of Aſſiſtance from outward Objects in their higheſt Acts of Religion, it had been to make Men to ſuſpect that the Body (as ſome Hereticks imagin'd) was little regarded of God, if no Notice had been taken of it, at our Reception into Covenant with him; and it beſides had been to contradict the Notion which Mankind have ever had of Religion, and to give the higheſt Scandal both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is ſo often the Subject of Sermons, and of every good Chriſtian's Medi-

Meditation, that very little needs to be here said of it. For it is evident that the Elements of Bread and Wine have a peculiar Suitableness to bring to our Remembrance the Body and Blood of Christ offer'd upon the Cross for us, to make us Partakers of them, and to be Pledges of all the Benefits which we receive thereby. And as the Eucharist was appointed by Christ in the room of the Paschal Supper, so Bread and Wine were in use among all Nations in their Religious Worship, and nothing can more fitly express our Communion with God and with one another, than to be entertain'd together at God's Table.

So that since there must be Sacraments or External Rites and Ordinances, they could neither be fewer, nor more suitable to the Simplicity of the Gospel, and to the Wants of Christians, than the Sacraments of Baptism, and of the Lord's Supper are.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Blessed TRINITY.

I Am not here to prove the Doctrine of the Trinity from the Scriptures, but to suppose this to be the Doctrine which the Scriptures teach, and to shew that no reasonable Objection can be brought against the Christian Religion upon that account. And indeed this was suppos'd to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures, and objected against by [a] *Heathens* long before the Council of *Nice*. Which is a strong Proof for the Truth and Antiquity of this Doctrine, when it was so well known even to the *Heathens*, that they upbraided the Christians with it in the second Century, and in all probability from the very beginning; for we

[a] Lucian. Philopatr.

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find it then mention'd as a known and common Reproach. Suppoſing then this to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are but one God, I will ſhew,

I. That there is no Contradiction in this Myſtery of our Religion.

II. That other things are and muſt be believed by us, which we as little underſtand.

III. That the Belief of this Doctrine doth mightily tend to the Advançement of Vertue and Holineſs, and hath a great Influence upon the Lives and Converſations of Men.

I. There is no Contradiction in this Doctrine. We are ignorant of the Eſſences of Created Beings, which are known to us only by their Cauſes and Effects, and by their Operations and Qualities; and our Reaſon and Senſes and Paſſions being continually converſant about theſe, our Notions are form'd upon the Ideas which we frame to our ſelves concerning the Creatures, and this makes us the leſs capable of underſtanding the Divine Eſſence, beſides the infinite Diſproportion between the Nature of God, and Humane Faculties. When we ſay, that God is an Infinite and Incomprehenſible Being, we ſpeak the general Senſe of Mankind, and no Man cavils at it; but becauſe the Scriptures repreſent this Incomprehenſible Being to us under the Notion of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, that is Matter of Cavil and Diſpute. Whereas God being eſſentially Holy and True, we muſt believe him to be what he declares himſelf to be in the Scriptures, and he being Incomprehenſible, we may not be able to comprehend it. If God be infallibly True, why do we not believe what he delivers concerning himſelf? And if he be Incomprehenſible, what Reaſon can be given why the Divine Eſſence may not ſubſiſt in Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt? Theſe are ſtyled Three Perſons, becauſe we find diſtinct Perſonal Acts and Properties attributed to them in the Scriptures, and

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we may ſuppoſe Three Perſons in the Unity of the Divine Nature without any Appearance of Contradiction. This will be evident, if we conſider,

1. The Diſtinction of the Three Perſons in the Deity.

2. The Unity of the Divine Nature.

3. The Difference between the Divine Perſons, and Humane Perſons.

1. The Diſtinction of the Three Perſons in the Deity. The Divine Nature is in Three Perſons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; in the Father Originally, without either Generation or Proceſſion; in the Son, as communicated to him by the Father, not in any ſuch way as Sons amongſt Men have their Nature derived to them from their Fathers, but yet in ſome ſuch manner as is beſt expreſs'd to our Apprehenſions, by ſtyling him the Son of God, tho' the Manner of his Generation is altogether incomprehenſible to us. The Holy Ghoſt has the Divine Nature communicated to him from the Father and the Son, not in the ſame way whereby the Son has it communicated to him from the Father, but in ſome other different incomprehenſible manner, whereby he is not begotten, but proceeds both from the Father and the Son. The Divine Nature is communicated by the Father to the Son by Eternal Generation, and by the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghoſt by Eternal Proceſſion: We have nothing farther reveal'd to us of the Generation of the Son, but that he is begotten, or receiv'd the Divine Nature from the Father in ſome ſuch way, as, for want of a fitter Word, we can beſt underſtand by the Term of Generation; and the Scripture teacheth us no more of the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, but that he is not begotten of the Father, as the Son is, but proceeds from the Father and the Son ſome other way, and not by Generation. But as he that would diſcourſe to a Man born blind concerning Light, muſt uſe many very improper Expreſſions

to make himſelf, though never ſo imperfectly, underſtood; ſo it is here; we have no Words that are proper, but theſe are ſufficient to teach us all which we are capable of knowing, at leaſt all that is neceſſary for us to know of the Godhead.

2. The Unity of the Divine Nature. To ſay that Three Gods are one God, or that Three Perſons are One Perſon, is a manifeſt Contradiction; but to ſay, that Three Perſons are (not One Perſon, but) One God, is ſo far from a Contradiction, that it is a Wonder how it ſhould be miſtaken for One by any who underſtand what a Contradiction means. *The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghoſt is God, and yet they are not Three Gods, but One God.* For neither of theſe Three Perſons is God diſtinct and ſeparate from the reſt, but they all are but One God; *One Lord* (Jehovah) *not Three* diſtinct and ſeparate *Lords*, and ſo *not Three Eternals, nor Three Incomprehenſibles, nor Three Uncreated, nor Three Almighties*, diſtinct and ſeparate from each other; but all the Three Perſons together are One Eternal, Incomprehenſible, Uncreated, Almighty Lord, God.

It is Matter of Diſpute, what is the Principle of *Individuation* in Men, or what it is which cauſes one Man to be a different Individual Perſon from another; and it is ſtill more difficult to find out the Principle of Individuation in Beings which are purely Spiritual, and have nothing of Material Accidents to diſtinguiſh them. But whatever the Principle of Individuation in Men may be, it is certain that the Conſequence of it is, that two Men may exiſt ſeparately both as to Time and Place, and that one may know more or leſs than the other; they may live at a diſtance the one from the other, and can never at once fill the ſame Numerical Place, nor is their Knowledge the ſame: there is nothing in their common Nature to determine them, that they ſhould be born or die together, or that there ſhould be any mutual Communication of

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the Thoughts, and Operations of their Minds, much leſs that their Life, and Death, and Operations, ſhould be all the very ſame. So that this Principle of Inviduation, whatever be aſſigned to be It, cannot belong to the Divine Nature, which is Omnipreſent, Eternal, and Omniſcient; the Exiſtence, Kowledge, and local Preſence of Men, are *Perſonal*, not *Eſſential*, but Omnipreſence, Eternity, and Omniſcience, are *Eſſential* Attributes of God, and not *Perſonal*, or do not belong to each Perſon, as they are diſtinguiſhed from one another, but as they are united in the ſame Eſſence; for they are predicated of the Father, as God; of the Son, as God; and of the Holy Ghoſt, as God; and not of each ſeverally, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghoſt. Every of theſe *Eſſential* Attributes therefore cannot be numbred with the *Perſons* in the Deity, but can be but One, as the *Eſſence* it ſelf of the Deity is, and tho' *the Father be Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghoſt Eternal, yet they are not Three Eternals*, or Three individual Beings of Eternal Exiſtence, as Three Humane Perſons are Three Men of a Finite Exiſtence. It is a Contradiction that there ſhould be Three ſeparate Infinite Perſons; for their being ſeparate, muſt ſuppoſe them to be Finite, or to have a limited and confined Subſiſtence; and therefore Three Infinite Perſons can be but One God, or One Being, which has all the Perfections of Perſonal Diſtinction, without the imperfection of the Diviſion of Perſons.

3. From hence appears the Difference between the Divine Perſons and Humane Perſons. The Perſons of Men, are diſtinct Men as well as diſtinct Perſons; but this is no ground for us to affirm, that the Perſons in the Divine Nature are diſtinct Gods, becauſe the Divine Nature is acknowledged to be Infinite and Incomprehenſible; and when we ſpeak of Three Perſons in it, we do not mean ſuch Three Perſons as Three ſeveral Men are. But we read of the *Perſon* of the Father, *Heb.* i. 3. and of *Three that bear record in Heaven*,

Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe Three are One, 1 John v. 7. and when we ſpeak of Three intelligent Beings, we can have no Conception of them, but under the Notion of Perſons. We learn from the Scriptures, that there are Three Perſons in the Deity, which bear that Relation to each other, which is beſt expreſs'd by the Terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but the Terms of Father, Son, and Spirit, are not therefore ſo to be underſtood, as they are in humane Relations; and the word Perſon is not to be underſtood, as it is of humane Perſons; and therefore whereas we uſe the word *Perſon*, the *Greeks* call them *Subſiſtencies*, but acknowledge that they mean the ſame thing under that difference of words.

And yet this is all the Foundation of any pretence of contradiction in the Notion of the Bleſſed Trinity, that Men will needs underſtand the Terms of Perſon, and of Father, Son, and Spirit, when they are applied to God, as they do, when we ſpeak of Men; and from thence they conclude, that Three Perſons in the Divine Nature muſt be Three Gods, as Three Perſons amongſt Men are Three Men; and that the Father muſt be ſuperior and elder than the Son, as it is in humane Generations. But this is all miſtake; *Adam* is ſtiled *the Son of God*, in a ſenſe of the word peculiar to himſelf, *Luke* iii. 38. God is, in one ſenſe, the Father of all Mankind; and, in another ſenſe, he is the Father of the Regenerate only; and when, in either ſenſe, we call him *our Father*, we take not the word *Father* in the ſame ſenſe that we take it in, when we apply it to Men; and when we ſay, he is the Father of his only begotten Son, this is another ſenſe of the word *Father*, very different from all the former. The Relation between the Father and Son, is not the ſame in the Nature of God that it is amongſt Men, nor are the Divine Perſons ſuch as the Perſons of Men are; but theſe are the fitteſt, and the moſt proper and ſignificant

nificant Terms, to express the Nature of God to us, that humane Language and humane Understandings are capable of. We must acknowledge, that there is a vast disproportion and impropriety in these Expressions, and that they give us but a very imperfect conception of the Divine Nature; but it is the most perfect that we are able to have of it, or that it is necessary for us to have of it in this mortal state; and if we will but allow for the incompetency of our own Faculties to have Words and Notions adequate to the Divine Nature, and will remember that God is God, and that we are but Men, there will appear to be no contradiction in the Notion of the Trinity.

The Divine Nature is such, that it has Three distinct Principles of Operation and Subsistency, which are so described and represented in the Scriptures by Personal Acts and Properties, that we know them to be as really distinct as humane Persons are, which yet being but One God, cannot in this respect be like humane Persons. And whoever will oppose this Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, must prove, that the Three Persons of the Trinity cannot be as really distinct, as the Persons of Three Men are, tho' they are not such Persons as the Persons of Men. And to prove this, he must understand the Nature of God, as well as he understands the Nature of Man; for otherwise he can never be able to prove, that Three Divine Persons may not be One God, tho' Three Humane Persons cannot be One Man. That they are distinct Persons is revealed, and that these Three distinct Persons are but one God is revealed, but wherein the Distinction and the Unity of these Three Persons consists is not revealed, nor is it possible for us to understand it, at least without a Revelation. The Distinction of the Persons of Men is founded in a separate and divided Subsistence, but this cannot be the Foundation of the Distinction of the Divine Persons, because Separation and Division cannot belong to an Infinite Nature.

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There is then no Repugnancy in ſaying, that there are Three Subſiſtencies, or Three diſtinct Principles of Perſonal Acts and Properties in one undivided Infinite Nature, or that the Perſons in the Trinity act as diſtinctly and perſonally, as Perſons do amongſt Men, but are united in one Infiuite Nature, which is uncapable of exiſting in ſeparate Subſiſtencies, tho' not of acting and ſubſiſting in Three diſtinct Perſons, or as diſtinctly from each other, as the Perſons among Men do act and ſubſiſt.

The Sum is, that in the moſt perfect Unity of the Divine Nature, do ſubſiſt the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, between whom is a real Diſtinction, which tho' not the ſame, yet is equivalent to the Diſtinction of Perſons among Men. That there is this Unity and this Diſtinction, we learn from the Scriptures; but what kind of Diſtinction this is, or how far it is to be reconciled with our Notion of Perſons amongſt Men, and after what manner it is conſiſtent with the Unity of the Godhead, the Scriptures have not told us, and it is impoſſible for us to determine.

II. Other things are, and muſt be believed by us, which are as little underſtood as this Doctrine. Our Knowledge at the beſt, concerning Finite Things, is very imperfect, which is ſo generally acknowledged by all Men of Wiſdom and Experience, that it is eſteemed a great point of Wiſdom for a Man to be truly ſenſible of his own ignorance; and it is the Character, which *Solomon* himſelf giveth of the Fool, that he *rageth, and is confident*, Prov. xiv. 16. But when we conſider things Infinite, we are much more at a loſs. That there muſt of neceſſity be ſomething Eternal, muſt be acknowledged by all, who underſtand what is meant by the word; even thoſe that are ſo *fooliſh*, as to *ſay in their hearts, there is no God*, yet muſt believe ſomething elſe to be Eternal; they muſt believe that there always was ſomething, becauſe, if ever there had been nothing, there never could have been any

thing. For, how could any thing have been produced by nothing? Out of nothing it might, but then there muſt have been ſomething to produce it. We can be certain therefore of nothing, if we are not ſure of this, that there is ſomething Eternal; the Atheiſt himſelf cannot deny it, unleſs he be ſo ſtupid as not to know what it means. And yet what apparent contradictions may he fancy to himſelf in the Notion of Eternity? For what is Eternal can never be capable of either a ſhorter or a longer Duration than it always had; ſo that Millions of Ages hence it will not have continued longer, than it had done as many Millions of Ages paſt. And how ſtrange and contradictory doth this ſeem to be, that not only three Ages and one Age ſhould be the ſame, but that there ſhould be no difference between one Hour or Moment, and never ſo many Ages in reſpect of Eternity. And there is no avoiding this difficulty, if a Man be of any Religion, or no Religion, let him but apprehend what is meant by Eternity, and he muſt own both that there is ſuch a thing, and that he is utterly unable to explain it. Here then is an unanſwerable Difficulty in a thing which all the World muſt believe, if they have it but ſo propoſed to them, as to be made underſtand what it is. And there is no difficulty imaginable in the Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity, which can be pretended to be greater, than that which is inſeparable from this Notion, which all muſt of neceſſity hold.

And if we do but obſerve it in Finite Things, which are uſual and familiar to us, and the Objects of our Senſes every day, we believe what we very little underſtand, or are capable of underſtanding. Our Knowledge indeed is ſo very imperfect concerning the Nature of moſt things, that I may almoſt venture to ſay, that if we will but be contented for the preſent to believe what God has delivered concerning his own Nature, we may hereafter know God himſelf as

plainly as now we know many things here. *For now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then ſhall I know, even as alſo I am known*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

If it be thought unreaſonable however, that ſuch abſtruſe Myſteries ſhould be made neceſſary to Salvation, and that we ſhould pronounce that *whoſoever will be ſaved, muſt thus think of the Trinity*, and that all who do not thus think and believe, ſhall *without doubt periſh everlaſtingly*.

Let it be conſidered, that in all Religions, whether Natural or Revealed, there muſt be ſomething believed, which is above all humane Comprehenſion, and which can be known no farther than in order to be believed; there can be no Faith without all Knowledge; but Knowledge, if it were compleat, would exclude Faith, which is *the Evidence of things not ſeen*. Knowledge may be conſidered, either as it *is general* and imperfect, or as it is *particular* and adequate to the Nature of the Thing known; we muſt have a general Knowledge of whatever is the Object of Faith, but if we had a particular and adequate knowledge of it, there could remain nothing of it unknown, to be the Object of Faith. The difference between Science and Faith is, not that we are leſs certain of the Objects of Faith, than of the Objects of Science, but that we know leſs of them. For Certainty depends upon our *general* Knowledge, as that God is true; and therefore what he has revealed, is as certain, as if we ſaw it, or could demonſtrate it in every particular. And this *general* Knowledge, which is neceſſary in order to Faith, is, in Natural Religion, attained to by Reaſon, and in Revealed Religion, from Revelation. Thus we attain to ſuch a *general* Knowledge of the Divine Nature by Rational Evidence, as to be convinced, that Infinite Power, and Goodneſs, and Truth, and all manner of Infinite Perfections belong to it; but we believe the Divine Perfections without any particular

comprehenſive Knowledge of them; in like manner, from Revelation we attain to this *general* Knowledge, that the Divine Nature conſiſts of Three Perſons in One undivided Eſſence, but we believe theſe Three Perſons to be One God, without any particular and comprehenſive Knowledge of ſo great a Myſtery; for then it would no longer be a Myſtery, and Faith would be no more Faith.

I would therefore ask the Adverſaries of this Doctrine, whether the Belief of a God, Omnipreſent, Eternal, Almighty, Omniſcient, infinitely Holy, Juſt, and Merciful, be not neceſſary to Salvation? No rational Man can deny it. I enquire farther, whether Infants and Idiots are obliged neceſſarily under pain of Damnation to this Belief? They muſt certainly anſwer, no; becauſe none can be obliged to Impoſſibilities. I demand then again, whether, if one or more of theſe Attributes, or the Agreement of them one with another, be impoſſible to be underſtood (with a *general* and imperfect Knowledge) by any who are capable of knowing and believing the reſt; the ignorance of theſe Articles, which are above their Underſtandings (even as to this *general* and imperfect way of Knowledge,) can be deſtructive of their Salvation? They muſt needs ſay it cannot, becauſe God can require nothing impoſſible of any Man. And the very ſame Anſwers applied to the Cavils againſt the *Athanaſian* Creed, will be ſufficient to ſilence them. That Creed contains ſuch Truths as are neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation, but neceſſary to particular Perſons ſo far only, as they are capable of knowing them, in order to believing them. *He that will be ſaved, muſt thus think of the Trinity*; but this ſuppoſes him capable of thinking thus; for it is ever ſuppoſed and agreed in all Caſes, that no Man is bound to any thing impoſſible; and that God requires nothing of any Man either in Faith or Practice beyond his power and capacity. *Whoſoever will be ſaved, be-*

fore

fore all things it is neceſſary, that he hold the Catholick Faith; which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he ſhall periſh everlaſtingly. But this ſuppoſes that he has already attain'd, or is able to attain to the Knowledge which is neceſſary to Faith, for no Man can hold that Faith, the *general* Knowledge whereof he cannot attain. We muſt with an implicit Faith believe all that God ſays to be true, though it be never ſo much above our Underſtanding; but no Man is bound to believe explicitly any more than he can underſtand ſo far, as is neceſſary to ſuch a Belief. He is able to underſtand ſo much of it, as to know in general what he is requir'd to believe, tho' he can have no ſuch complete and comprehenſive Notion of it, as to give a particular and full Account of the Nature and Manner of Exiſtence of that which is to be believ'd by him.

And let the Articles of Faith ſuppoſed neceſſary to Salvation according to Natural Religion be never ſo few and plain, yet there will ſtill be ſome Men, who are uncapable of underſtanding them in any way or meaſure; and then there will lie the ſame Objections againſt thoſe Articles of Natural Religion, which are upon this account urged againſt their Faith in the Trinity it ſelf; which, ſo far as it is required to be known and believ'd, is not above the Capacity of the Generality of Mankind; and no more is required to be believ'd explicitly of any, than they are capable of knowing in ſuch a degree, as is neceſſary in order to ſuch a Belief; whatever Articles of Faith be aſſign'd in Natural or Reveal'd Religion, they will be above the Capacity of many Adult Perſons, and of all Infants, to apprehend them; who therefore according to all Religions may be ſaved without the actual Knowledge of thoſe Articles which are never ſo neceſſary to others. And what may be objected againſt all Religions, Natural as well as Reveal'd, ought in

Reason to be objected against none; for there can be no force in it.

III. This Doctrine exceedingly tends to the Advancement of Virtue and Holiness, and has a great Influence upon the Lives and Conversations of Men.

That God the Father should send his Son, his only begotten, and only beloved Son, to be born and to die for us, is an endearing and amazing Act of the Divine Goodness. The Death not of a meer Man, but of the Son of God blessed for ever, in our stead, must needs heighten our Love of God, and our Faith and Dependence on him; our Hatred of Sin, and our Assurance of Pardon upon Repentance. This I have prov'd at large in discoursing of the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God for us, and therefore shall not insist upon it here.

In like manner, whatever the Holy Ghost hath done, and is continually doing for us, must needs be of more weight with us, and give us quite another Notion and Apprehension of his Goodness and our own Duty, than we could have had, if we believ'd him to be a Creature. For unless we believe him to be God, we cannot have that devout Love and Faith, and Dependence upon him, which we ought, we cannot have that Esteem and Reverence for his Communion and Presence, which is required of us, nor that Sense of the Heinousness of Sin, whereby we resist, and grieve and do despight to him. That Argument of S. *Paul*, *What? know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost?* and many other to the like purpose, would be lost, but on Supposition, that the Holy Ghost is God. We can never have that Sense which it behoves us to have of our Sins committed in Opposition to the Gifts and Influences of his Grace, without an Acknowledgment of his Godhead. So that our Faith, and Hope, and Fear, and Love, is more excited and enlarged, and all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls are more disposed to the Obedience of the Gospel,

Goſpel, through the Belief of this Doctrine of the Trinity, than they could be without it. And therefore as there is nothing abſurd, or impoſſible to be believ'd in this Doctrine, ſo it was very reaſonable and expedient that it ſhould be reveal'd, and ſhould be required to be believ'd.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Reſurrection of the Dead.

THE *Reſurrection* of our Saviour from the Dead, was that which the Apoſtles chiefly inſiſted upon in all their Diſcourſes: For if once they could convince Men, that Chriſt was riſen from the Dead, they could not fail of perſuading them into a Belief of all that they taught beſides. There was no other Part of their Doctrine which could ſeem more ſtrange and incredible than this; and when that, which they could with ſo much difficulty be brought to believe, and which could not come to paſs but by the Almighty Power of God himſelf, was evidently and undeniably prov'd to them; this muſt give that Credit and Authority to all their other Doctrine, that it could be no longer withſtood or gainſay'd. This therefore is the Point which the Apoſtles moſt of all urged, knowing that if they could gain this, all the reſt would follow of courſe, and that every Man muſt of neceſſity be converted to the Belief of the whole Goſpel of Chriſt, who was once convinced of his Reſurrection.

And St. *Paul*, in his Defence before King *Agrippa*, puts the Queſtion, *Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead?* Acts xxvi. 8. which implies, that it is a very unreaſonable thing to think, that God cannot raiſe the Dead, and that therefore there was all the Reaſon in the World

to believe that he had rais'd Chriſt. For there was ſo great Evidence of his Reſurrection, and ſo many Men daily witneſs'd it at the peril of their Lives, that if their Adverſaries would but allow the thing to be poſſible, there could be no Doubt remaining, but that Chriſt was indeed rais'd from the Dead.

The Apoſtle argues, that it is a very abſurd thing to ſay, that God cannot raiſe the Dead. What Reaſon could any Man give why God cannot do it? Or how durſt any Man ſo limit and confine the Infinite Power of God by his own Notions and Conceptions of things, as to ſay that the Reſurrection of the Dead cannot be effected by him? This is unreaſonable and abſurd in the higheſt degree, and therefore it is manifeſt that Chriſt is riſen, and that there is to be a general Reſurrection of the Dead, ſince there is no other Objection that can lie againſt it, but the Impoſſibility of the thing it ſelf. For our Reſurrection is aſſerted in the Scriptures, as a neceſſary Conſequence of Chriſt's Reſurrection, 1 *Cor.* xv. 20. and his Reſurrection was ſo well atteſted, that the greateſt Enemies to Chriſtianity could not deny the Evidence of the Fact, ſuppoſing the thing poſſible; but they would not own it poſſible, that ſuch a thing ſhould be, and upon that account rejected all the Evidence that could be produced, as tending only to prove an Impoſſibility, and ſo not to be regarded. I ſhall therefore ſhew the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and that it is unreaſonable to think it incredible that God ſhould raiſe the Dead.

If it be incredible, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead, it muſt be upon one of theſe two accounts; either becauſe he cannot, or becauſe he will not do it. For what God both can and will do, is ſo far from being Incredible, that it is a moſt Undoubted Truth. Therefore I ſhall

First, Prove that God is certainly able to raiſe the Dead; and,

Secondly,

Secondly, That he certainly will do it.

1. That God is certainly able to raiſe the Dead, is a thing credible in it ſelf, and therefore ought to be eſteem'd incredible by no ſort of Men whatſoever, tho' they have no Knowledge of any Reveal'd Religion, if they have but right Apprehenſions concerning God. No Man can have a true Notion of God, but he muſt know that God is a Being of Infinite Power and Wiſdom; that he made the World, and all things therein; that he preſerves and ſuſtains all Creatures, and that all things are wholly at his Will and Diſpoſal, to do with them as he pleaſes; that nothing can oppoſe or reſiſt his Will, or give him the leaſt Hindrance in any thing which he is pleas'd to undertake. How then can it ſeem incredible that God ſhould raiſe a Dead Man to Life again, when he at firſt gave him his Life? And is it not as eaſy to reſtore it to him, as to give it him at firſt? Might we not as well diſpute that it is impoſſible for a Man to be born, as that it is impoſſible for him to be rais'd from the Dead, if our own Experience did not convince us of that, but not of this? God, who gave all that Power and Ability, which Natural Cauſes have to produce their Effects, may, if he pleaſes, produce the ſame Effects immediately by himſelf. For it is not becauſe he ſtands in need of any help from Natural Cauſes, that he has appointed them, but becauſe it ſeem'd beſt to his Infinite Wiſdom to appoint this Courſe and Order in the World.

And it is evident even to Natural Reaſon, that there muſt have been ſome who were immediately created by God, and were not born of others, as Men are ſince, that there muſt have been ſome *Firſt Parents*, ſome, who had no Parents themſelves, but were of God's immediate Creation, that there muſt have been ſome who were the Firſt of all Mankind, and therefore could be born of no others. Since then Man muſt of neceſſity have been firſt form'd by God himſelf, and not

not have come by a Natural Birth into the World; it is evident, that God might have made as many Men and Women after this manner as he had pleas'd; and he, who is the Author of our Nature, may act without it, and as much beyond and above any Natural Powers and Faculties in his Creatures, as it ſeems beſt to him. And it may as well be thought incredible, that God ſhould at firſt make Man, as that he ſhould be able to raiſe him up again after Death; for Death is only the End of Nature's Power of working, not of the Power of God himſelf; who, as he originally made the Race of Mankind, ſo he appointed the Nature of Things, and gave it a ſtinted Power, which it cannot exceed; but his own Power is Infinite, and no Bounds can be ſet to it.

When a Man is once dead, Nature has done with him, and can never recover him to Life again; for God ordain'd at firſt, that according to the Courſe of Nature he ſhould only be born, and live here a while; not that his Life ſhould be reſtored again to him after Death. But he is not ſo confined himſelf, that he cannot give Life to the Dead, but has reſerv'd this as his own Prerogative, and above any thing in Nature's Power. God, who form'd *Adam* of the Duſt of the Ground, might have form'd all Mankind ſo, if he had pleas'd; and he can as eaſily raiſe all Mankind to Life again out of the Duſt, as he made the firſt Man out of it.

And the Atheiſt, one would think, has of all Men the leaſt pretence to ſcruple the Reſurrection of the Dead, who muſt ſuppoſe that Mankind at firſt ſprung out of the Earth as Plants do, by a Spontaneous Production; and for him to pretend that the Bodies of Men cannot be rais'd to Life again by an Almighty Power, is as unreaſonable, as any thing in Atheiſm it ſelf can be.

When at certain Seaſons every Year, we ſee things receive a New Life, as it were, according to the Courſe

Courſe of Nature, we may well conclude, that if ſo ſtrange an Alteration can proceed from Natural Cauſes, then ſurely God is able to effect that which is much more wonderful, and to raiſe even theſe Bodies of ours after they are dead and rotten in the Grave, to Life again. And ſince the Corn which is ſown in the Earth, *is not quickned except it die*, and will not revive and grow again and come to Perfection, unleſs it be firſt bury'd in the Ground, and undergo great Alterations there; it is a fooliſh thing, as the Apoſtle argues, to doubt of the Reſurrection of the Dead, becauſe we cannot underſtand the way and manner of it. Let Men anſwer all the Difficulties in Nature, and it will be time enough afterwards to diſpute with them about a Reſurrection; but when we are at a loſs about the moſt common and obvious things, it muſt be great Preſumption to deny the Reſurrection, becauſe we cannot comprehend it; when alas! what is there beſides that we are able to comprehend? Will we preſume to ſay that God can do nothing, but what we underſtand how it may be done; when every thing we ſee, may inform us that his Wiſdom is Infinite, and *his ways paſt finding out*. Indeed, if we underſtood every thing elſe, there might be ſome pretence to ſcruple the Reſurrection, becauſe we do not underſtand how it ſhall be. But when our Ignorance is ſo notorious in all other things, it is the Heighth of Folly and Perverſeneſs, to think our ſelves competent Judges of ſuch a Myſtery as this. So far are we from being able to make any Eſtimate of God's Power, and ſo far is the Reſurrection from being Incredible, becauſe there may be Objections made about it, which may ſeem unanſwerable; that if no other Anſwer could be given, this would be ſufficient, that God can do more than we can have the leaſt Thought or Conception of; and that it is no Argument that he cannot do what we cannot conceive how it ſhould be done, ſo long as there is nothing contrary to the Divine Nature

ture in it, nor which implies a Contradiction, the Doctrine of the Reſurrection would be very credible and certain too, whatever other Objections might be urged againſt it; which yet are not in themſelves ſo formidable as they may be imagined to be.

All the Objections againſt the Reſurrection of the Dead are either againſt the Reſurrection of Bodies after their Corruption and Diſſolution, or againſt the Reſurrection of the ſame Bodies of Men which they had before their Death, becauſe the Parts of our Bodies are in a perpetual Change and Flux here, and after Death by ſeveral Accidents, as by the devouring of Humane Bodies by Men, or by Fiſh, or other Creatures, which are afterwards eaten by Men, it may come to paſs that the ſame Parts which compounded one Man's Body, ſhall afterwards belong to another's, and yet in the Reſurrection they can belong but to one of theſe Bodies. But,

1. Bodies after their Corruption and the Diſſolution of the Parts which compoſe them may be reſtored to Life by the Re-union of theſe Parts again. We have ſeveral Inſtances of this in Natural Philoſophy, that Bodies divided into never ſo minute Parts, tho' theſe Parts be mix'd and confounded with the Parts of other Bodies, may, by Chymical Operations, be reduced to their former State and Condition, and which is of nearer affinity to the Subject in hand, after the Aſhes of a Plant have been ſown in a Garden, fairer and larger Plants have ſprung up than had been known of that kind in the place where the Experiment was made. And [a] Mr. *Boyle* thinks it ſcarce to be imagined *what Expedients to reproduce Bodies, a farther Diſcovery of the Myſteries of Art and Nature, may lead us Mortals to. And much leſs*, ſays he, *can our dim and narrow Knowledge determine what means, even Phyſical ones, the moſt wiſe Author of Nature, and abſolute*

[a] *Mr.* Boyle's *Conſideration about the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection.*

Gover-

Governour of the World, is able to employ to bring the Reſurrection to paſs. And where the Powers of Nature fail, we know that God is Infinite, and can want no means to effect whatever he pleaſes.

2. We may riſe with the ſame Bodies which we have here, notwithſtanding any Change or Flux of the Parts of our Bodies while we live, or any Accidents after Death. It is agreeable to Reaſon, and to the Obſervations of Philoſophers and Phyſicians, to believe that the Bones and Muſcles, the Tendons and Nerves, and all the *Eſſential conſtituent Parts* of humane Bodies, are of ſo firm and ſolid a Subſtance, as to ſuffer little Alteration during our Lives, when once they are come to their full growth and proportion, but to continue the ſame till we die; and the Alterations which they undergo, before Men come to their full ſtature, is by addition of Parts, not by the diminution of thoſe wherewith we are born. It appears from a late Diſcourſe of a [b] Learned Phyſician, that Nutrition is a ſupply of the Fluid Parts, and that the proper Subſtance of the Solid Parts ſuffers no Diminution, but in ſome extraordinary Caſes, and therefore can ſtand in no need of Reparation but in ſuch a Caſe. For *the whole Body is Vaſculur*, or made up of Veſſels and Pipes repleniſhed with their ſeveral Subſtances; ſo that in an *Atrophy* the Fibres become dry, and the Nerves and Veſſels are contracted, and ſhrunk, for want of the Spirits, and Juices, and Liquors, which before filled and diſtended them. But the Solid Parts are of ſo durable a Subſtance, that they can ſuffer no Diminution, but by ſuch Corroſives to diſſolve them, as muſt produce Ulcers, and ſuch as would affect the Fibres with ſo intolerable Pains, that *the Torments of the Stone and Gout would be moderate and eaſie to them*;

[b] Dr. Haver's Oſteolog. *ſecond Diſcourſe of Accretion, and Nutrition.*

which,

which, in a Conſumption, would be Univerſal in all Parts of the Body; whereas there is no ſuch Symptom in any Part; and in the greateſt Conſumptions, the Bones are found to retain their entire Bigneſs; tho' a piece of Bone is ſooner diſſolved by a Corroſive Liquor, ſuch as *Aqua-Fortis*, than Muſcular Fibres of equal quantity or weight.

It is wont to be obſerv'd upon this Subject, that when the Change of Parts is gradual, and in the courſe of ſome Years the Body may ſtill be the ſame, as it could not be, if the Change were made all at once. A Ship or Houſe remains the ſame, tho' it be never ſo often repaired, and tho' the Materials in Succeſſion of Time be all or moſt of them renewed: whereas, if it ſhould be taken to pieces all at once, and all the Materials ſhould be changed, and new Materials of the ſame Figure and Dimenſions ſhould be exactly in the ſame manner framed and built up together in their ſtead, theſe would make another Houſe or Ship, and and not the ſame that was before.

But when the Parts which *conſtitute* the Humane Body, and give it the Denomination of the Body of this or that individual Man continue the ſame, the ſame Perſon has the ſame Body in his Old Age, that he had in his Youth, as truly as he has the ſame Body in Sickneſs, which he had in Health; and the ſame under the Languiſhings of a Conſumption, which he had in his greateſt Vigour and Strength. For the Change is only in the variable and accidental Parts, which are not *neceſſary* to *conſtitute* the Body of ſuch a Man; and the *neceſſary conſtituent Parts* (tho' they were changed or altered, as in ſome very rare caſes they may be) being ſo few in Compariſon of the reſt, which make up the Bulk of a Man's Body, can hardly be ſuppoſed by the devouring of Canibals, or by any other Accident to become the *conſtituent Parts* of any other Man's Body.

[c] *Sanctorius*, from his Statick Experiments, has obſerved, that a very inconſiderable part of what we eat, is turned to Nouriſhment; and from the ſmall proportion which the *Neceſſary conſtituent Parts* bear to the reſt, and the unfitneſs of them, as of Bones, *&c.* to nouriſh, it may be concluded, that little or nothing of that which turns to Nouriſhment, can be ſuppoſed to be of thoſe *conſtituent Parts*; and conſidering farther the great Changes which happen in our Bodies in the continual Flux of Parts, and the ſmall Proportion again, which the *conſtituent*, or *neceſſary eſſential Parts* have to the reſt, we may conclude, (ſuppoſing thoſe Parts as well as others to ſuffer Alteration) that it is the greateſt odds, that the *conſtituent Parts* which turn to Nouriſhment, do not by that Nouriſhment happen to belong to the *conſtituent Parts* of the Man's Body, who is nouriſhed by them when he comes to die. So that if a Man ſhould live wholly upon Humane Fleſh, which it is not to be believ'd that ever any Man did, yet it would perhaps be above an Hundred to one whether any *conſtituent Part* of his Body were made up when he died, of the *conſtituent Parts* of any other Man's Body. And beſides, it muſt be granted by all, that believe a God and a Providence, that a particular Providence may take ſuch effectual care of us as to reſerve to every Man his own Body in all the *Eſſential Parts of it*; *the Hairs of our Heads are all numbred*; that is, they are as well known to God, as they could be to us, if we had told and numbred them never ſo exactly; and therefore much more the *neceſſary Parts* of us are under his Cognizance and Care.

Theſe *neceſſary conſtituent Parts* then being the ſame, God may ſupply the reſt, as he ſhall ſee fitting; and the Body will be the ſame after the Reſurrection, that it was in this Life, tho' the Bodies of Men at the Re-

[c] Sanctor. *De ſtaticâ Medicinâ*, Sect. i. Aph. vi, lix, lx. Sect. iii. Aph. x.

ſurrection

ſurrection muſt ariſe in all the Perfection of an Humane Body, and therefore muſt have no part wanting: For if any part of an Humane Body ſhould be be wanting, they would not have all the perfection of ſuch a Body, tho' they ſhould be never ſo perfect in all the Parts which they be ſuppoſed to have. For if a Man having but one Eye, or one Ear, ſhould be able to ſee or hear with that one better than ever any Man did with two, yet it would ſtill be a defect in his Body to want an Eye, or an Ear.

All the uſes of any one part of our Bodies are not perhaps yet fully known, and the Dependence which one part has upon another may be ſuch, as that it may be requiſite that thoſe Parts ſhould be raiſed for their relative uſefulneſs, which may ſeem to have no proper uſe of their own after the Reſurrection. The Sight is a Senſe which may be capable of Improvements beyond what we now are able to conceive, as we may conclude from the Improvements which have been made by the help of Microſcopes and Teleſcopes. And who knows, but that in the Glorified State our Eyes ſhall have that Perfection, as to be able to diſcern the Contexture and Motions, and the whole Frame of thoſe Pure, Spiritual and Cœleſtial Bodies, and then thoſe Parts, which now to the naked view, and much more, when diſcerned thro' Microſcopes, cauſe ſo much Admiration, will be ſtill much more admirable to behold, when they are thoroughly ſeen and fully underſtood by us; and to want thoſe Parts which may ſeem to be then no longer of any uſe, would be to want one great Argument of our Praiſe of God in the contemplation of his Wonderful Works.

But this is mentioned only to ſhew that an ordinary Fancy, if it be allowed to take the Liberty which ſome have done upon this Subject, might eaſily propoſe as probable Reaſons in Defence of the Received Doctrines,

Doctrines, as can be framed againſt them. The [d] Author of *the Anſwers to the Orthodox* amongſt the Works of *Juſtin Martyr*, ſays, that ſome Parts of our Bodies, tho' they will then have no direct uſefulneſs, yet will be raiſed at the laſt Day, to be Memorials to us of the Wiſdom of God in that uſe which we had of them in this Life. And [e] St. *Auſtin* ſays, that the Glory of God will be magnified, in that he will have freed thoſe Members from the Corruption to which they were ſubject here. However, it ought to ſuffice Chriſtians that our Bodies ſhall be like to Chriſt's Body, and therefore ſhall have the full perfection and proportion of all the Parts conſtituting an Humane Body, as his Body had after his Reſurrection. *We know that we ſhall be like him*, 1 John iii. 2. and as for any thing farther, it will be time enough to know it at the Reſurrection.

II. It is not only credible and reaſonable to believe that God can, but likewiſe that he will raiſe the Dead. The Revelation of his Will in his Holy Word, ought to put this beyond Diſpute among Chriſtians. But beſides, it appears to be requiſite from the Nature of Man, conſiſting of Soul and Body, that there ſhould be a Reſurrection of the Body; it is fit that the Man ſhould be puniſhed that ſinned, and that the Man who lived well here, and ſuffered for Righteouſneſs ſake, ſhould be rewarded for it. But if the Soul only be puniſhed, or the Soul only be rewarded, the Man is not rewarded or puniſhed; for the Soul is but part of the Man, but Soul and Body together make up the whole Man, and therefore it is requiſite that the Soul and Body ſhould be re-united. *For we muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. For this Reaſon it is requiſite, that the Soul ſhould be

[d] Quæſt. 53. [e] Aug. *Civit. Dei*, lib. xxii. c. 17.

again united to the ſame Body; otherwiſe the Soul and Body would conſtitute a Man, but not the ſame Man that was before, the Body not being the ſame; for it muſt be the ſame Soul and the ſame Body that make the ſame Man. *As in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22. the ſame Body therefore that died in *Adam* is to be made alive in Chriſt; *who ſhall change*, or [f] transform, *our vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf*, Philip. iii. 21. Chriſt himſelf roſe with the ſame Body that was Crucified, and we are to be like him at the Reſurrection, and to have our Bodies changed into the likeneſs of his Glorious Body. When we read, that at the Reſurrection, *All that are in the Graves, ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of Man, and ſhall come forth*, John v. 28, 29. and that the *Sea will give up the Dead which were in it*, Rev. xx. 13. How is it poſſible to underſtand this of any thing, but of the ſame Bodies which died? And indeed, if a New Body were aſſumed, how could it be a Reſurrection? Which implies the Riſing again of that Body, which, after the Separation of the Soul, was buried in the Grave; and otherwiſe, as it is uſually argued, one Body may be puniſhed for the Sins committed in another.

If it be ſaid, that the Body is only the Inſtrument of Senſation to the Soul, but is it ſelf capable of none, and therefore muſt be uncapable of Rewards or Puniſhments. It may perhaps be Anſwered, that this is more than can be abſolutely concluded from the Notions of Modern Philoſophy againſt the general Senſe of Mankind, and the Philoſophy of all former Ages. However, the Body being unable to determine it ſelf in its Senſations, if it have any of its own; I confeſs, I cannot think this Argument fit to

[f] Μεταχημαλίσῃ.

be

be inſiſted upon, in as much as no Actions can be capable of Rewards or Puniſhments, but ſuch as proceed from Choice.

But it muſt be acknowledged, that the Soul may be capable of more Happineſs or Miſery, when re-united to the Body, than in its ſeparate ſtate. For beſides the Anguiſh, or the Peace and Joy of Mind, beſides its own Reflections, and its proper Operations, which the Soul is capable of in a ſtate of Separation from the Body; it is capable of being affected with Senſations, which ariſe from its Union with the Body. And that theſe may be anſwerable to what a Man's Actions in this Life have been, the Soul muſt be united to the ſelf-ſame Body, ſo diſpoſed and qualified to affect the Soul as it was in this Life, only with infinitely greater, more exquiſite and more laſting degrees of Pain, or of Joy and Satisfaction; yet without any mixture of groſs and ſenſual Pleaſures in the Righteous, but only ſuch as are ſuitable to ſpiritual Bodies. And this diſpoſition of Body depends upon the vertuous or vicious Actions and Habits of Men here; for a Body, by vicious Practices and Cuſtoms, prone to raging and furious Paſſions, inſatiable Appetites, and tormenting Inclinations and Deſires, (without any thing to gratifie or aſſuage them) muſt have quite another effect upon a Soul, than a Body ſubdued to the mild, and calm, and obedient Temper of Religion and Vertue. And tho' God could by his Almighty Power form another Body to that Frame and Diſpoſition, which the Body of any particular Man was in, when his Soul departed out of it; yet it doth not ſeem agreeable to the Divine Goodneſs and Purity, by his immediate Power, to frame a New Body to the depraved Temper and Inclinations of a vicious Man. The Soul ſeems to have a natural Aptitude and Tendency implanted in it, to a Union with its own Body: from whence elſe proceeds that great Reluctancy to a Separation from it? And we are ſo

little acquainted with the Union of the Soul and Body, that for ought we know, a Soul can be united only to its proper Body. The Truth is, we know nothing of theſe Matters, but from the Scriptures; all beſides is only Conjecture. But the Doctrine of the Scriptures is probable even to our Reaſon, tho' indeed it ought to over-rule Reaſon, eſpecially in things which are ſo obſcure, and ſo little underſtood by us. God has declared, that he will raiſe theſe Bodies to Life again at the Day of Judgment; and whatever we may think of it, to him all things are alike eaſie; it is as eaſie for him to do, as to ſay it.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Reaſons why Chriſt did not ſhew himſelf to all the People of the Jews *after his Reſurrection.*

ST. *Peter* ſpeaking of Chriſt's Reſurrection, ſays, *Him God raiſed up the third Day, and ſhewed him openly, not to all the People, but unto Witneſſes choſen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he roſe from the Dead*, Acts x. 40, 41. After his Reſurrection he was ſhewn openly, but not to all the People; he was ſeen in a plain and open manner, yet not ſo publickly, as to make all the People witneſſes of his Reſurrection. The Will and good Pleaſure of God is a ſufficient Reaſon to us of all his Actions, eſpecially in Acts of Mercy: For it would be a ſtrange Return made but to a *Man* for any Favour received, to be captious and quarrelſome about the manner of his beſtowing it, inſtead of being grateful to him for it. But beſides this general Reaſon, which ought to be of force with us in all caſes, there are Reaſons peculiar to the preſent caſe, whereby we may

may be able to give an account of it, even according to our own apprehenſions of things.

I. There are Reaſons peculiar to this Diſpenſation of Chriſt's Reſurrection; why Chriſt ſhould not ſhew himſelf to all the People, after he was riſen from the Dead.

II. It had not been ſuitable to the other Diſpenſations of God towards Mankind for him to do it.

III. Great Numbers of the *Jews* were given over to hardneſs of Heart, and would not have believed, tho' they had ſeen Chriſt after his Reſurrection.

IV. If they had believed, their Converſion had not been a greater proof of the Truth of his Reſurrection, than their Unbelief has been.

V. The Power of his Reſurrection manifeſted in the Miraculous Gifts beſtowed upon the Apoſtles, was as great a Proof of his Reſurrection, as the Perſonal Appearance of our Saviour himſelf could have been.

I. There are Reaſons peculiar to this Diſpenſation of his Reſurrection, why Chriſt ſhould not ſhew himſelf to all the People after he was riſen from the Dead. Chriſt, after his Reſurrection, was to act according to the Majeſty of the Divine Nature, not according to the Infirmities and Condeſcenſion of the Humane; the time of his converſing with Men was at an end at his Death, and then another method and manner of Diſpenſation was to begin; he was then to converſe only with his particular Friends and Favourites, to ſatisfie them of his Reſurrection, and to inſtruct and enable them both by their Doctrine and Miracles to ſatisfie others. It could not be ſuitable to the Dignity of his Majeſty, which he had aſſumed after his Reſurrection, to ſubmit himſelf to the Cenſures of his Enemies; he had ſuffered enough from them already in the ſtate of his Humiliation, and muſt he never be above the Suſpicion and Scrutiny of their Malice? Shall not his Reſurrection free him from it?

When they ſaw him hanging upon the Croſs, they cry'd out with upbraiding and inſolent Scorn, that they would believe in him, if he would come down from thence; but neither did they deſerve ſuch a Miracle to be wrought at their Pleaſure, who thus call'd for it, nor was it ſuitable to the Divine Diſpenſation, that it ſhould be wrought. It was neither fitting that he ſhould ſave himſelf from Death, nor that he ſhould appear to them after he was riſen from the Dead. He was to die for our Redemption, and as we had wanted the Argument from his Reſurrection for the Truth of our Religion, if he had come down from the Croſs; ſo, if he had appear'd to all the *Jews*, we had wanted other Evidence; which, as I ſhall ſhew, at leaſt amounts to all the Proof which that could have given.

In the ſtate of his Humiliation, our Saviour was pleas'd to ſuffer himſelf to be expoſed to *the contradiction of Sinners*, and to all their Affronts and Injuries; but when *this their Hour and the Power of Darkneſs* was once paſt, they were to ſee him no more, but with Confuſion of Face, and Terrour of Mind; yet his Mercy was ſtill the ſame towards them; one of the greateſt Perſecutors was converted by a Voice from Heaven, the Son of Man ſpeaking to him from thence, that he might be the happy Inſtrument in the Converſion of others, and a *Pattern* to them of the *long-ſuffering* of Chriſt, 1 *Tim.* i. 16. But his Manifeſtation of himſelf to St. *Paul* at his Converſion, was with dreadful Awe and Majeſty, not in that mild and gracious Glory, in which he was ſeen by St. *Stephen*; and it is reſerv'd for thoſe who perſecuted and *pierced him*, to look upon him with Conſternation and Anguiſh at the Laſt Day, *Rev.* i. 7.

II. It had not been ſuitable to the other Diſpenſations of God towards Mankind for Chriſt to be ſhewn openly to all the People. God might work ſuch aſtoniſhing Miracles, and ſtrike ſuch Terrours into the Minds

Minds of Men, as to make it impoſſible for any one to doubt of his Exiſtence, or of the Truth of his Word; but he doth not all which he can do, but what he in his Wiſdom ſees fit to be done; he doth not uſe all the Means which ſome Men may conceit he might uſe, but leaves Men without excuſe, and then requires their Faith and Obedience at their peril. To imagine that Chriſt ſhould have appear'd promiſcuouſly unto all, is as unreaſonable, as to ſuppoſe that God ſhould communicate himſelf to all alike, or that he ſhould have ſpoken from Heaven to Men without the Meſſage and Miniſtry of his Prophets. For when Chriſt was riſen from the Dead, he was no longer to act like a Mortal Man, but as in his Glorify'd State, as our Lord and King, and as God in our Humane Nature, now no longer ſubject to any of its Imperfections; and therefore he was no more to come himſelf to the People, as he had done in the ſtate of his Humiliation, but to ſend his Apoſtles and Diſciples among them, as he had before his Incarnation ſent the Prophets.

III. Great Numbers of the *Jews* were given up to Hardneſs of Heart, and would not have believ'd, tho' they had ſeen Chriſt after his Reſurrection. Thoſe, who when they had ſeen our Saviour's Miracles, had vilify'd them, and blaſphem'd the Holy Ghoſt, by whom they were wrought, had their Hearts hardned, that *ſeeing they might ſee and not perceive, and be converted.* And of this number the Chief-Prieſts and Elders muſt be ſuppos'd to be, who hired the Soldiers to contradict and ſtifle the Belief of his Reſurrection with a falſe Story of their own Invention. The Chief-Prieſts before had conſulted to put *Lazarus* to Death, when he was undeniably known to have been rais'd from the Grave, *John* xii. 10. So far were they from being brought to a Belief in Chriſt by the Sight of *Lazarus*, that they fully verify'd that Saying, that there are ſome, who *will not believe, though one roſe*

from the Dead. *Lazarus* was ſhewn openly to all the People, and [a] liv'd among them for many years after he had been reſtored to Life again, when he had been Dead four Days; and they would not believe, tho' they ſaw and convers'd with him, but were the more enraged at it; Chriſt himſelf therefore, after his Reſurrection, did not vouchſafe them his Preſence, but uſed other Means which were more proper.

IV. If the *Jews* had believ'd in Chriſt, their Converſion had not been a greater Proof of the Truth of his Reſurrection, than their Unbelief has been. Their Stubbornneſs and Hardneſs of Heart was foretold by the Prophets, with their Diſperſion, and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and the Propagation of the Goſpel (according to the Prediction likewiſe of the Prophets) in ſo miraculous a manner, not only at a diſtance, but in *Judea*, and in *Jeruſalem* it ſelf, notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition which the *Jews* could make, gave as great a Teſtimony to it, as their Favour and Protection could have done. And therefore it was juſt with God rather to leave them to the Hardneſs of their own Hearts, than to uſe ſuch farther Methods with them, as were unſuitable to the Divine Diſpenſation in the Myſtery of our Redemption, and would either have only hardned them to a greater degree, or at leaſt would not have prov'd more effectual towards the Manifeſtation of the Truth of the Goſpel.

V. The Power of Chriſt's Reſurrection manifeſted in the miraculous Gifts beſtow'd upon the Apoſtles, was as great a Proof of his Reſurrection, as the Perſonal Appearance of our Saviour himſelf could have been. Our Saviour ſhew'd himſelf to *Witneſſes choſen before of God, to be Witneſſes of all things which he did, both in the Land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem*, Acts x. 39, 41. theſe Men knew his Life and Doctrine, they had been inſtructed by him, and had forſaken all for

[a] Epiphan. Hær. 66. n. 34.

him,

him, and according to his Promiſe were *endued with Power from on high*, to enable them to teſtify to the whole World, that they had not only ſeen him, but had often convers'd with him after he roſe from the Dead. And one of their chief Qualifications was, that they were but a few poor and ignorant Men, without Force or Policy, without any Art or Contrivance; they could tell a plain Truth, but could neither feign nor diſſemble; if they had been more in number, the Converſion of the World had been ſo much the leſs miraculous; and they were not choſen out of the Scribes and Elders, who had been uſed to Artifices and Falſhood, but had them all along their Enemies, and oppoſed to their Craft and Power an honeſt Simplicity of Mind, that neither knew what belong'd to Deceit, nor fear'd any in ſo good a Cauſe; nor were they in the leaſt diſcourag'd to ſee their own and all other Nations againſt them. *God had choſen the Fooliſh things of the World to confound the Wiſe; and God had choſen the Weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty*, 1 Cor. i. 27.

Theſe Men, under all Neceſſities, and Perſecutions, and Dangers, and Torments, both Living and Dying, witneſs'd that they had ſeen Chriſt alive after he had been crucify'd; and tho' they were but very few in compariſon of their Enemies, yet conſider'd as Witneſſes, they were many, for *he was ſeen by above five hundred at once*, which is a vaſt number in any matter of Evidence; and if ſo many Men be not a ſufficient Teſtimony, no number of Men could have been. That which is demonſtrated but in one way, is as certain as if it were demonſtrable in never ſo many Methods; and he who ſees a thing plainly with his two Eyes, may be as ſure of it, as if he had never ſo many Eyes to ſee it withal. *It is written in the Law of Moſes, that the Teſtimony of two Men is true*, or credible, and to be rely'd upon for Truth, *John* viii. 17. and it is the Law and Practice of all Nations to con-

tent

tent themſelves with a ſmall number of ſufficient Witneſſes in proof of the moſt important Affairs. And if theſe *Witneſſes choſen before of God* ſpoke, and acted, and ſuffer'd, as no Men would or could have done, if they had not been well aſſured of what they teſtify'd, and aſſiſted from above in preaching the Goſpel; the Truth of the Reſurrection of Chriſt is as infallibly deliver'd to us by their Teſtimony, as it could have been by the Teſtimony of never ſo many more: for all that never ſo many others could have done, would have been but the ſame thing over again, which theſe Men certify'd by *many infallible Proofs*; and what is once infallibly prov'd, is as certain, as if all the World ſhould agree in declaring it. It is not the Number of Witneſſes, but the Character and Qualifications of the Perſons, and the Evidence it ſelf, in its full Force and Circumſtances, which are chiefly to be regarded in Matters of this Nature. If but a few Men can make it ſufficiently appear, as the Apoſtles did, by undeniable Miracles, that what they ſay is true, and that God himſelf confirms the Truth of it, they then appeal to every Man's own Senſes, before whom they work their Miracles, and make every one that ſees them a Witneſs to the Truth of their Doctrine, God himſelf bears witneſs to it, and the *Jews* might have ſaid in this, as they did in a very different Caſe, *What need we any farther Witneſſes? for we our ſelves have heard of their own mouths*, in the miraculous Gift of Tongues, or ſeen it with our own Eyes, in the many wonderful Works which were continually wrought in the moſt publick manner, in Teſtimony of the Reſurrection of Chriſt.

Our Bleſſed Saviour therefore gave as full Proof of his Reſurrection, as if he had appear'd in the Temple, or in the midſt of *Jeruſalem*, to the whole People of the *Jews*. For this had not been more effectual to the Converſion of moſt of them, nor more ſufficient to evidence the Truth of the Goſpel, than his Appearance

pearance to his Diſciples was; and if the *Jews* had unanimouſly believ'd, it could not have contributed more to convince Men of the Truth of the Reſurrection, than their Unbelief has done; he ſent his Apoſtles with a miraculous Power, as convincing as his own Appearance could have been; and all things conſider'd, the *Jews* afford us as full Evidence in behalf of the Goſpel, by oppoſing it, as they could have done by their Compliance with it. And ſince we have ſufficient Teſtimony to reſolve our Faith into the Divine Veracity, the Certainty is the ſame, whether the Witneſſes be more or fewer, becauſe it depends upon the Veracity of God, which is always the ſame, whatever the means be, by which our Faith is reſolv'd into it.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of the Forty Days in which Chriſt remain'd upon Earth after his Reſurrection, and of the manner of his Aſcenſion.

OUR Bleſſed Saviour had certify'd his Diſciples of his Reſurrection in ſuch a manner, as to give them *many infallible Proofs* of it, or elſe it is impoſſible for any thing to be infallibly proved; and that which is chiefly to be conſider'd in this matter is, that he was ſeen by them not once but often, not for a ſhort time, or at a haſty Interview, but for *forty days* together, and then he perform'd the common Actions of Humane Life, *he did eat and drink with them*, and diſcours'd with them of the things relating to his Kingdom. *To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his Paſſion by many infallible Proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*, Acts i. 3. That which I here deſign is,

to

to make ſome Obſervations upon the Converſation that our Saviour had with his Diſciples, during the Forty days between his Reſurrection and his Aſcenſion, and upon the manner of his leaving them, when he aſcended into Heaven.

2. The Scriptures acquaint us that our Saviour was ſeen of his Diſciples Forty Days, or that he vouchſafed them his Preſence the greateſt part of that time which he remain'd upon Earth after his Reſurrection. But in what manner all that time was ſpent with them, we are no where told; which is no Wonder, if we conſider how much of his former Life is conceal'd from us.

In the Scriptures, which are written for our Inſtruction, and in the plaineſt and ſincereſt manner in the World to inform us of all things neceſſary to our Salvation, we have nothing taken notice of, for Oſtentation nor for Ornament, but many things omitted in the Life of Chriſt, which are thought needful in Humane Authors, to make up a compleat Hiſtory. We have no more mention'd of his Parentage than was neceſſary to make it evident that he was deſcended from *David*, and born of a Virgin, as the Prophets had foretold of him. When he was born, we read that the Shepherds and the Wiſe-men came to worſhip him; that he was circumcis'd, that he was brought to *Jeruſalem* to be preſented to the Lord, and that he was carry'd into *Ægypt* to avoid *Herod*'s Cruelty; and hereby known Prophecies were fulfill'd. Afterwards he was brought to *Nazareth* upon the Death of *Herod*, and from that time we read no more of him, till the Twelfth Year of his Age, when he diſputed with the Doctors in the Temple. And then we are told, that he went down to *Nazareth*, and was ſubject to his Mother, and to *Joſeph*; and in general terms, that he *increaſed in Wiſdom and Stature, and in favour with God and Man*; as it was before ſaid of him, that he *grew and waxed ſtrong in Spirit, filled with Wiſdom,*

and

and the grace of God was upon him, Luke ii. 40, 52. The next time we read any thing of him, is when he was about Thirty Years of Age, and came to *John* to be baptized.

Thus, not only during his Infancy and Childhood there is little related of our Bleſſed Saviour, but his riper Years are paſſed over in ſilence; in all which time, we may be ſure that there was no Speech or Action of ſo Divine a Perſon, but what well deſerved the obſervation of all that knew him, and was more worthy of mention in Hiſtory, than all the renowned Adventures and Exploits, or than the Wiſe or Witty Sayings which adorn the Lives of the Greateſt among the Sons of Men. But Modeſty, Humility, and a Contempt of the Praiſe of Men, were ſome of the great and uſeful Doctrines in which he came to inſtruct Mankind; and he could not do this more effectually than by his own Example, in leading a mean and obſcure Life, little known or taken notice of in the World, 'till two or three Years before he was to leave it by a cruel and infamous Death. He did not chuſe to ſpend his time in places of Publick Reſort and Converſe; and when he Diſputed in the Temple, yet nothing of the Particulars is mentioned. This obſcure and unknown Perſon was to rebuke and comptrol the Pride and Vanity of the Popular Scribes and Phariſees.

And after he had appeared in the World, very much of his Life was ſpent in privacy and retirement; not many of his Diſcourſes are delivered down to us, and the greateſt part of his Actions are omitted. For if they had been all written and deſcribed in their ſeveral Circumſtances, many Volumes muſt have been taken up in the Narrative of them; inſomuch that St. *John ſuppoſes, that even the World it ſelf could not have contained the Books that ſhould have been written*, John xxi. 25. that is, as we might expreſs it in our Language, he did a world of things more than theſe, which

which are related of him; and in the ſame ſenſe of the Word, St. *James* ſays, that the Tongue is *a world of Iniquity*, James iii. 6. The meaning of St. *John* is, that hardly any words could expreſs how many other things were done by our Saviour, beſides thoſe which he had ſet down. Chriſt might have employed ſome accurate Hiſtorian to compoſe the Annals of his whole Life with the greateſt exactneſs imaginable; but he was pleaſed to be repreſented to the World, very imperfectly, by ſuch as knew nothing of what belonged to the writing Hiſtory, any farther than to be able to tell the ſtrict and neceſſary Truth. The Evangeliſts wrote his Life with the ſame Humility with which he lived.

And it is obſervable, that when St. *John* ſays, that there were ſo *many other things which Jeſus did*, he ſpeaks with relation to the things done by him after his Reſurrection, having juſt before given an account of what our Saviour had ſaid to St. *Peter*. And ſo in the foregoing Chapter, when St. *John* has declared how our Saviour certified St. *Thomas* of the Truth of his Reſurrection, he adds, *And many other Signs truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this Book; but theſe are written, that ye might believe, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have Life through his Name*, John xx. 30, 31. So that we are acquainted with no more than was neceſſary, of what paſs'd between our Saviour and his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, the reſt concerns us not to know; it was for their inſtruction and encouragement in their Duty, and they were empower'd to teach and inſtruct us. We know, that *beginning at Moſes and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himſelf*, Luke xxiv. 27. but we are no where told what were the Particulars of his Expoſition; only we are ſure, that the Apoſtles in their Explications of the Old Teſtament followed the Interpretations which he had given.

given. We read that he was *ſeen of them forty days, and ſpoke of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God?* From whence we may conclude, that the time between the Reſurrection and the Aſcenſion of Chriſt, was chiefly ſpent in comforting and inſtructing them, and in expounding to them the Scriptures concerning his Paſſion and Reſurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghoſt after his Aſcenſion.

St. *Paul* mentions, that *he was ſeen by above Five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greater part* were then ſtill alive to teſtifie the truth of what he ſaid, 1 *Cor.* xv. 6. tho' this particular, however remarkable, is omitted by the Evangeliſts; for they relate things juſt as they ſaw it needful upon every occaſion, and ſince they ſaid enough to convince Men, they were not careful to ſay all that might be ſaid, they were ready to die in teſtimony of what they delivered, and daily wrought Miracles to confirm it; and therefore were not ſolicitous to lay together all the Particulars, or to put them into any exact Order and Method; they declared what they knew, and their Miracles proved it, and they depended not upon ſuch Niceties as Humane Proofs have need of.

We may reaſonably conclude then, notwithſtanding the ſilence of the Sacred Writers, that when Chriſt had once fully manifeſted himſelf to his Diſciples, and ſatisfied them in his Reſurrection, the reſt of the time till his Aſcenſion was moſt of it ſpent with them in Divine Diſcourſes for their Inſtruction and Comfort; ſuch as thoſe are which we read in the Evangeliſts, one of whom declares, that a full account of all that paſs'd between him and his Diſciples was more than could well be expreſs'd. That happy time was employ'd in pure and ſpiritual Joys and Contemplations, in forming and preparing them for the Reception of the Holy Ghoſt.

As ſoon as *Mary Magdalen* knew our Lord after his Reſurrection, ſhe fell at his Feet to worſhip him,

and

and would touch his ſacred Body, *Matth.* xxviii. 9. *John* xx. 17. For this Reaſon perhaps too, as well as out of Devotion to him, that ſhe might be able to give the Apoſtles the better account of his being riſen again. But he forbad her, ſaying, *Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended to my Father*, and then ſends her to his Diſciples, to his *Brethren*, as he with infinite Love and Condeſcenſion ſtyles them. He was not yet aſcended, [a] or was not then about to aſcend, but to ſtay many Days upon Earth, and there would be time enough for her nearer approaches to him; either for the encreaſe and confirmation of her Faith, or for her Acknowledgment and Adoration. After his Reſurrection, Chriſt made himſelf known to his Diſciples by degrees, and by ſeveral Appearances to them at diſtant times, in divers places, and in different manners; he ſuffered them to doubt of that great Article of our Faith for a while, that he might overcome their Unbelief, and extort a Conviction from them by ſuch means, as that no Man, unleſs he would be very unreaſonable and obſtinate, ſhould pretend any cauſe to doubt of it afterwards. But when he had throughly convinc'd them of his Reſurrection, we may conclude from what we read of his converſing with them, that from that time, he admitted them to a freer and more intimate Communication with himſelf, and diſcourſed with them in the moſt mild, and gracious, and inſtructive manner, of all which it concerned them to know pertaining to his Kingdom, or which they were capable then of knowing, before the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; ſometimes perhaps vouchſafing his Preſence to one, and ſometimes to others of them, and moſt commonly to them all together, when they were aſſembled, as we find they generally

[a] Οὔπω ἀναβέβηκα, the Preterperfect Tenſe for the Preſent. *I do not yet aſcend*: As, νυνὶ δὲ ἔγραψα, 1 Cor. v. 11. *I now write*; for the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Epiſtle which he was then writing.

were.

were. And when he withdrew himſelf, it was becauſe their mortal ſtate would not bear a conſtant and uninterrupted Attendance for ſo long a time upon their Bleſſed Maſter; and becauſe it was requiſite, that they by degrees ſhould be accuſtomed to endure his Abſence, and to *walk by Faith, not by Sight*; and after his Aſcenſion, the Holy Ghoſt, the Comforter, did not immediately come upon his departure from them, but their Faith was to be exerciſed in the expectation of him for the ſpace of Ten Days, and then his Promiſe was to be fulfilled in the fitteſt and moſt proper Seaſon, on the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*.

In few words, Chriſt *was ſeen of them*, ſays the Scripture, *forty Days*; which implies, that theſe, for the moſt part, were ſpent in his Preſence; and we are in the ſame place told how this time was employ'd, in *ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*

II. We may obſerve the manner how our Saviour left his Diſciples, when he aſcended up from them into Heaven. He had before prepared them to expect his Aſcenſion; for beſides what he had ſaid to them before his Death, immediately upon his Reſurrection he ſent this Meſſage to his Diſciples by *Mary Magdalen, Go to my Brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God*, John xx. 17. They were in hopes, it ſeems, that he would *at this time have reſtored again the Kingdom to Iſrael*, and did not think he would have left them, before that, which they ſo much deſired, had been accompliſhed. However, taking his leave of them, *he commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the Promiſe of the Father, which, ſays he, ye have heard of me.* And whilſt he was giving them repeated Aſſurances that this Promiſe ſhould be moſt effectually fulfilled, *while they beheld, he was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their ſight*; he was not ſnatch'd away from them by

a ſwift and violent motion, like *Elijah*, and carried up in a fiery Chariot, which might dazle their ſight, that they could not diſcern him in his Aſcent, but he was lifted up and removed from them leiſurely, and by degrees, *they looked ſtedfaſtly towards Heaven as he went up*, by a viſible and eaſie motion, and they had a clear view of him, 'till at laſt *a Cloud received him out of their ſight*. It is probable, that all the Diſciples to the Number of *about an hundred and twenty*, mentioned, *Acts* i. 15. were preſent to behold the Aſcent of our Saviour. The [b] Apoſtle St. *Thaddeus* declared, tho' this (as well as many other things) is not inſerted into the Scriptures, that a great multitude of the Saints and Heavenly Hoſt went up with him; we read of the Appearance of two Angels upon this Occaſion, who acquainted the Diſciples, *that this ſame Jeſus*, whom they had thus evidently ſeen, *taken up from them into Heaven, ſhould ſo come in like manner, as they had ſeen him go into Heaven*. And St. *Paul* informs us, that the manner of his coming at the laſt Day, will be *with his mighty Angels*, or the Angels of his Power, 2 *Theſ.* i. 7. St. *Jude*, that he will come with *ten thouſands of his Saints*, (Jude, ver. 14.) and our Saviour himſelf, that *all the holy Angels* will attend him, *Matth.* xxv. 31. From whence we may conclude, according to the Account of St. *Thaddeus*, that the Holy Angels viſibly attended him in his Aſcenſion.

The Diſciples were all much ſurprized at a thing ſo wonderful, and *ſtood gazing up into Heaven* after him, 'till they were certified not only by their own Senſes, but by the Meſſage of the Angels that he was gone from them into Heaven, no more to be expected from thence, till the Day of Judgment.

We have therefore the plaineſt and fulleſt Evidence that can be deſired, both of the Reſurrection and Aſ-

[b] Apud Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. 1. c. ult.

cenſion

ceſion of our Saviour. *He ſhewed himſelf alive* to his Diſciples, *after his Paſſion, by many infallible Proofs*; he was *ſeen of them forty Days*, and converſed and diſcourſed with them, tho' we are not told after what manner, and by what intervals of time he was pleaſed to vouchſafe them his Preſence; this being concealed from us, as very many of the Particulars are of his former Life before his Crucifixion. But at the end of the ſpace of *forty Days*, whilſt he was in the midſt of them, he aſcended into Heaven in the ſight of them all, in ſuch a manner, that they diſtinctly ſaw and beheld him, and kept their Eyes fix'd upon him in his Aſcenſion, and a Viſion of Angels beſides informed them, that he is to return in the like manner, when he ſhall come to judge the World.

CHAP. XXX.

Why ſome Works of Nature are more eſpecially aſcribed to God; why Means was ſometimes uſed in the working of Miracles; and why Faith was ſometimes required of thoſe, upon whom, or before whom Miracles were wrought.

I. ALL the Powers of Natural Cauſes proceeding from God, *that* may juſtly be aſcribed to him, *which* is wrought by them, for he works as truly by Second Cauſes, as by his own direct and immediate Power, in producing any Effect. The Order and Frame of Nature was originally by his Appointment, and by his Care, and Providence, and Influence, it is upheld; and therefore the Scriptures aſcribe the effects of Natural Agents to God as the Author of them; becauſe theſe can do nothing but by his Support and Influence: and the continuance and preſer-

vation of Natural Cauſes in the production of their Effects for ſo many Ages in one conſtant Tenour, is a manifeſt and wonderful Demonſtration of the Divine Power and Wiſdom.

But thoſe things may be ſaid, more eſpecially, to be done by God himſelf, whereby, upon ſome extraordinary occaſion, his Power and his Will are more particularly manifeſted, or his Promiſe is fulfilled; for in thoſe things, his Care and Providence is more concerned to bring them to paſs; and therefore God may employ a more than ordinary concourſe to ſuſtain and influence the Powers of Nature, that they may not fail in ſuch Caſes to produce their Effects according to their uſual and ſetled Courſe.

II. The Scripture takes no farther notice of the Works of Nature, than as they are manifeſtations of the infinite Power, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of God; and therefore it refers all immediately to him, without any mention of the intermediate Natural Cauſes. But it gives ſuch an Hiſtorical Account of Miracles, as to exclude all Natural Cauſes, and by deſcribing with what Circumſtances they were brought to paſs, ſhews, that they could not be produced by the Natural Courſe of Things. Natural Effects are aſcribed to God, as the Creator and Preſerver of all Things; by whoſe Power and Influence alone it is, that Natural Cauſes can act. But Miracles are aſcribed to him, as acting without any ſubſerviency of inferior Cauſes. It is one thing to omit the mention of Natural Cauſes, and another to exclude them. Both Scripture and Reaſon teach us, that no Child can be conceived but by the Power of God: but we read, that Chriſt was miraculouſly conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of a Virgin. St. *Paul* preached to the *Athenians*, that in God *we live, and move, and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. But when *Lazarus* was raiſed to life again, after he had been dead four Days; and when St. *Peter*, by pronouncing only a few words,

 cauſed

caused a lame Man to walk, we know from the Circumstances, that this Life, and this Motion was above all the Powers of Nature to bestow.

III. Miracles are more peculiarly the Works of God, because they are wrought without the Concurrence or Subserviency of Natural Means. For though sometimes outward Means were used in the miraculous Curing of Diseases, yet they were such as could have no effect in the Cure, but rather the contrary; as when the Man that was born blind received his Sight by washing in the Pool of *Siloam* at our Saviour's Command, after his Eyes had been anointed with Clay made of Dust and Spittle. The Ointment made of Dust and Spittle was so far from having any Effect towards the Cure, that it would have been much more likely to have put out the eyes of a Man that had seen; and the Washing afterwards could only remove that which was so far from being a Remedy, that it must have been an Obstruction to the best Sight.

As many miraculous Cures were wrought by our Saviour, without any more than a Word speaking, and sometimes even without so much as that, to shew that he had no need of Means; so when any Means were used, they were such as apparently could not tend to the Cure, and were not used as Remedies, but as Circumstances, in the working his Miracles to raise the Attention of the Beholders, to imprint what was done the deeper upon their Memories, and to give the greater Credibility to the History of his Miracles. For all matter of Fact is to be prov'd or disprov'd by Circumstances; and the more Circumstances concur in any Action, the less liable it is to Mistake or Imposture. Our Saviour therefore was pleas'd that his Miracles should always be accompany'd with remarkable Circumstances, which were sometimes of one kind, and sometimes of another, the better to work upon the Variety of Mens Tempers and Dispositions; but whatever outward Means was at any time used by him,

it could have the Nature only of a Circumſtance, and was no more proper and effectual to produce the Miracle, than any other might have been. Some he touch'd, ſome he only ſpoke to, and others he ſent to the High-Prieſt, that he might be a Witneſs of the Cure. Now the Touch, the Speaking, or the Sending could have no Effect as outward Means, but only as they were attended with an inward and Divine Efficacy. But all theſe were conſiderable Circumſtances to excite the Obſervation of thoſe who were preſent at theſe Cures, and to preſerve the Remembrance of them to Poſterity.

IV. Tho' our Saviour had the moſt abſolute and unconfined Power of working Miracles at all times, and before all Perſons, whenſoever he pleaſed, yet we may obſerve that he ſometimes refuſed to exerciſe it. For though he could always do his marvellous Works, yet it was not fit that they ſhould be always done, but then only when they might be uſeful and ſerviceable to the Ends for which they were wrought, and to his Deſign of coming into the World, to manifeſt himſelf by working them. And that this was the Reaſon why our Saviour did ſometimes require Faith as a Qualification in them who came to be healed, and at other times refuſed to work his Miracles before Unbelievers, will be evident, if we conſider, that

1. Chriſt had given undeniable Proof of his miraculous Power in many Inſtances, before he required Faith, as a Condition in ſuch as came to him to ſee his Miracles, and to receive the Benefit of them. When the *Jews* demanded a Sign of our Saviour, *John* ii. 18. he had wrought before them the greateſt of all his Miracles, in [a] St. *Jerom*'s Judgment, by caſting the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. But they were ſo unreaſonable as upon this very account to ask for another Miracle: *What Sign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing*

[a] Comment. in Matt. xxi. 15.

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that thou doeſt theſe things? Whereupon our Saviour ſignifies to them, that he would riſe again from the Dead; and this was no Refuſal, but only a ſhort Delay of his working other Miracles; for at that very *Paſſover when he was in Jeruſalem in the Feaſt-day many believed in his Name, when they ſaw the Miracles which he did.* He rewarded the Faith of Two Blind Men, by *opening their eyes*, Matt. ix. 29. which was a proper Inſtance, to ſhew, that there might be a full Aſſurance of the Truth of Miracles, without the Sight of them; or elſe, what would become of the Blind? How ſhould Men in remote Countries and future Ages be ſaved? He rejected the unreaſonable Demand of the Scribes and Phariſees, who ſought to deſtroy him for working one Miracle, and blaſphem'd the Holy Ghoſt when he had wrought another, and yet required a Third, *Matt.* xii. 38. And then the firſt time we find Faith required as a Diſpoſition or Preparation in Men to have Miracles wrought for their Cure, or their Conviction, is *Matt.* xiii. 58. *Mark* vi. 5. And before the time to which theſe Texts have relation, Chriſt had cured *all manner of Diſeaſes*, and caſt out many *Devils, and his Fame was ſpread abroad throughout all the Region round about Galilee*, and even *throughout all Syria*, Matt. iv. 23, 24. Mark i. 28. He had cured the *Centurion*'s Servant at a diſtance, and had reſtored to Life the Daughter of *Jairus* a Ruler of the Synagogue. Where it may be obſerved, that he commended the Faith of the *Centurion*, tho' the Cure was wrought upon his Servant; that he exhorted the Father not to be *afraid*, but to *believe*, when his Fear or Faith could have no Influence upon his dead Daughter; as he alſo required Faith in *Martha*, that ſhe might *ſee the Glory of God* in raiſing *Lazarus*, John xi. 40. He had caſt out a Legion of Devils at once, and permitted them to enter into the Herd of Swine, to convince even the *Sadducees*, if any thing could convince them, that they were Evil Spirits which he had

caſt out, *Matt.* viii. 13. *Mark* v. 9, 22. And when our Saviour's Miraculous Power had thus manifeſted it ſelf upon all ſorts of Perſons, upon the Abſent, upon the Dead, and upon others, who could neither hope for, nor deſire Relief of him, and this in the Sight of many who were ſtill Unbelievers, and of ſome who charged him with caſting out Devils by *Beelzebub*, *Matt.* xii. 24. *Luke* xi. 15. it was highly reaſonable, that he ſhould afterwards require a Belief of what he had already done, and was again able to do, before he would extend his Healing Power towards Men, and that he ſhould work no new Miracles for the Conviction of ſuch as diſregarded and disbeliev'd all that he had done before.

It doth not appear, that Chriſt ever required Faith of any before his working of a Miracle, who had not already ſeen him work Miracles, unleſs it were of his own Country-men, and of ſome who came to be healed. His Country-men, by their Aſtoniſhment at his Doctrine and his mighty Works, ſeem to ſhew that they had no Experience of them before, but that they were unknown at leaſt to the generality of them, any otherwiſe than by Report; but theirs was a peculiar Caſe, as I ſhall preſently prove. Thoſe who came to him with no cavilling Deſign, but with a Deſire and Expectation of Help from him, cannot be ſuppoſed to doubt of his Power to do that for them, which they had ſeen him do for others; but many apply'd themſelves to him upon the common Report and Fame of his miraculous Works, and it was requiſite that theſe ſhould believe what they had heard ſo well atteſted, if they would receive that Benefit which they beſought of him. But as to others, it cannot be prov'd that Chriſt did ever, in order to his working a Miracle, require Faith of them, who had never ſeen him work any Miracle before, though, if he had done it, there might have been ſufficient Reaſon for it. But all beſides, in whom the want of Faith is at any time al-

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ledg'd as the Cauſe, why they had no Miracle wrought upon their account, in order to their Conviction, had in all probability ſeen Miracles wrought by him before, which they would not believe, and that was Reaſon enough, why no more ſhould be wrought for them, to be deſpiſed, as the former had been: Or however, our Saviour's Miracles were ſo publickly and frequently wrought, that they might have ſeen them, either before or afterwards, tho' they were not done purpoſely for them, when they required it. Thoſe, of whom Chriſt at any time required Faith, before he would work Miracles, were either ſuch as had ſome malicious and captious Prejudice againſt him, or ſuch as came to be cured of their Diſeaſes and Infirmities.

(1.) As for the captious and malicious, there was great Reaſon why they ſhould be rejected, and no Miracles ſhould be wrought for them. We read that *he did not many mighty works* in his own Conntry, *becauſe of their Unbelief*, Matt. xiii. 58. But tho' he did not many mighty Works there, yet he did ſome, which indeed were not many in compariſon of what he did in other places. And there was a particular Reaſon why he did no more there, becauſe it was his own Country, and they upbraided him with his mean Birth and Education; whereupon Jeſus ſeeing them *offended in him, ſaid unto them, A Prophet is not without Honour, ſave in his own Country, and in his own Houſe*; and ſo, as it immediately follows, *he did not many mighty Works there, becauſe of their Unbelief.* He had done many wonderful Works in the adjacent Countries, and his Fame was ſpread throughout all *Galilee*. *He had preached in their Synagogues, throughout all Galilee, and caſt out Devils*, Mark i. 39. his firſt Miracle was in *Cana* of *Galilee*, and the *Galileans* were Witneſſes to his Miracles at *Jeruſalem*, John iv. 45. He wrought a Miracle in *his own City*, when the Scribes and Doctors of the Law out of every Town in *Galilee* were pre-

preſent, *Matt.* ix. 1. *Luke* v. 17. Here by *his own City*, we are to underſtand *Capernaum*, Mar. ii. 1. For leaving *Nazareth*, he came and dwelt there, *Matt.* iv. 13. But his *own Country*, where he did not many Miracles, was *Nazareth*, and the Parts near it. When he went to *Nazareth where he had been brought up*, they ſaid, *is not this Joſeph's Son?* and were ready to expoſtulate with him, *whatſoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do alſo here in thy Country. And he ſaid, verily I ſay unto you, no Prophet is accepted in his own Country*, Luke iv. 16, 23. He, who knew the Hearts of all Men, [b] ſaw how unſucceſsful all his Works would be upon his own unhappy Country-men, who had been ſo little moved with what they had heard of him, and with what many of them probably had ſeen him do in other places, that they only derided and vilify'd him: And he, who had ſo tender a Compaſſion for all Mankind, and with great Affection wept over *Jeruſalem*, could not but have ſuch a Concern for his own Country, as to refrain the working of thoſe Miracles, which he had otherwiſe deſign'd, foreſeeing, that they would only ſerve to aggravate their Guilt, and increaſe their Damnation, till by his Reſurrection he ſhould give an undeniable Evidence of his Divine Power, and then ſhould ſend his Diſciples among them after his Aſcenſion, to whom they would have greater regard, as to Strangers, againſt whom they had not that unjuſt and fooliſh Prejudice. For we never read, that the Apoſtles did any where forbear to work Miracles, becauſe of Unbelief, but in all Places, and among all Perſons they ſhew'd forth the wonderful Works of God. But when the Works of Chriſt, which were ſo wonderful, and ſo well known in all parts of *Galilee*, had ſo ill effect upon thoſe of his own

[b] Non quod etiam, illis incredulis, facere non potuerit virtutes multas, ſed ne multas faciens virtutes, cives incredulos condemnaret, Hier. ad loc.

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Country: St. *Mark* ſays, That *he could there do no mighty Work, ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed them, and he marvelled becauſe of their Unbelief*, Mark vi. 5, 6. He wrought ſuch Miracles as his infinite Goodneſs merely drew from him, and then wondred at the Obſtinacy of their Unbelief, which hindred him from working any more. For there are ſome things which God himſelf cannot do, not for want of Power, but becauſe it would imply an Imperfection in him, a Defect of Power, and a Contradiction to his Divine Nature to do them. *The Lord could no longer bear* with the Jews, *becauſe of the Evil of their doings*, Jer. xliv. 22. *God cannot lye, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf*, 2 Tim. ii. 13. Tit. i. 2. He can act nothing unbecoming his own Wiſdom and Goodneſs; he cannot do Miracles, when he ſees they will be to no good purpoſe, but will be abuſed to a very ill one. Yet to ſhew his Compaſſion, and to manifeſt that his Power was not reſtrain'd in it ſelf, but that their Unbelief had reſtrain'd it from them, he laid his Hands upon the Sick, and healed them, but did no more; for he can do nothing improper and unfit to be done.

The requiring of more Miracles, when ſufficient had been wrought already, was a *Tempting* and provoking of God, it was impiouſly to bid Defiance to his Power, and to challenge him to do whatever they durſt demand of him. Our Saviour therefore rebukes the Scribes, and the Phariſees, and the Sadducees, for ſeeking after a Sign, *Matt.* xii. 39. xvi. 2. But the firſt time, he had wrought a Miracle juſt before in the Cure of the Man, whoſe Hand was wither'd, and of the blind and dumb Man, who was poſſeſs'd with a Devil; and when they ſtill required farther Signs, and being unmov'd with what had been already done, they had now charged him with caſting out Devils by *Belzebub*, our Lord had great Reaſon to refuſe to work any more Miracles before ſuch obſtinate and ungrate-

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ful Men, which he ſaw were ſo far loſt upon them, that they ſerv'd only to render them altogether unpardonable in blaſpheming the Holy Ghoſt; and therefore he tells them, That there was no other Sign left for them, who had not yet incurr'd that Sin which was never to be forgiven, but the Reſurrection of the Son of Man. This was a Sign which might convince the moſt incredulous, and which was deny'd to none, but was reſerv'd as the laſt means. And ſeveral things which were done and ſaid by Chriſt in private, were not to be divulged till after his Reſurrection, becauſe before they might fall under Suſpicion; but *that*, and the Miracles wrought by virtue of it, would ſufficiently prove whatſoever his Diſciples ſhould ſay of him. When they again demanded a Sign, he had a little before heal'd great Multitudes, and had fed ſeveral Thouſands by Miracle in the Wilderneſs; and therefore he again refers this *wicked and adulterous Generation* of Men *to the Sign of the Prophet Jonas*. Dr. *Lightfoot*, in his *Remains* lately publiſh'd, has obſerv'd, as the Reaſon why the *Jews* were ſo importunate for a Sign, notwithſtanding the many Miracles which our Saviour wrought before them; That their Traditions taught them to expect theſe two Signs of the *Meſſias*, when he came, *viz.* that he ſhould raiſe the Old Prophets, and other holy and famous Men from the Dead, and that he ſhould bring down *Manna* for them from Heaven. In their Old Writings and Records, he ſays, they ſpeak much of theſe Two things of their Expectation. I am inclined to believe that theſe Traditions, if they had been rightly underſtood, were not ſo blind and fooliſh, as that Learned Author ſtyles them, but had reſpect to the very Time and Occaſion, to which our Saviour refers the *Jews*, when they required theſe Signs of him. For at his Reſurrection *many Bodies of Saints, which ſlept, aroſe*, Matt. xxvii. 52. And ſpeaking to them of the *Manna*, or Bread which came down from Heaven, he puts them

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in mind of his Aſcenſion: *What, and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before?* John vi. 62. Whereby he intimates, that then would be the time of ſending this *Manna*, when upon his Aſcenſion, he would beſtow the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. The time was not yet come for theſe Miracles to be wrought, they were not to be wrought at their Demand; it was ſufficient that they had Intimations given to expect them, and in the mean time they ought to have been contented with others.

We have as little Reaſon to imagine, that our Saviour ſhould work Miracles to gratify the Curioſity of *Herod*, Luke xxiii. 8. who *hoped to have ſeen ſome Miracle done by him*; or that he ſhould expoſe his Divine Power to *Herod*'s Contempt and Mockery, when he had ſo lately wrought a Miracle in curing the Ear of *Malchus*, who was ſo far from believing in him, that he was one of them who came to apprehend him. It was an Act of Mercy to cure this Man, but to work Miracles only to give Men an occaſion to vilify that Power by which they were done, could be neither worthy of God, nor any Charity to Men, but it would have been unſuitable to the Character and Authority of Chriſt, to debaſe himſelf to a Compliance with them, who uſed him with ſuch Scorn and Deriſion, and only reviled and tempted him. *Herod* was diſappointed in his hope and expectation of ſeeing a Miracle, and was not deny'd it for want of Faith: For he believ'd that Chriſt had wrought Miracles, and ſuppos'd that *John the Baptiſt*, whom he had beheaded, *was riſen from the Dead*, and that *therefore mighty Works did ſhew forth themſelves in him*, Matt. xiv. 2. But perceiving him not to be *John the Baptiſt*, *he ſet him at nought*.

(2.) In the caſe of thoſe, who came to deſire his help for the Cure of themſelves and others, though they had not ſeen any Miracle wrought by him before, yet it was reaſonable that Chriſt ſhould work

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no Miracle for them, if they wanted Faith in what he had already wrought, and did not believe him able to perform, what they would ſeem to expect and deſire him to do. When he had given ſo many Demonſtrations of a Divine Power, he might juſtly expect an Acknowledgment and Belief of it in all that came to him, and would receive any Benefit from it. He might ſurely beſtow his Favours and Benefits upon his own Terms; and no Terms could be more reaſonable, than that thoſe who came to ask them, ſhould really believe, that he was able to beſtow them, and ſhould apply themſelves to him, with an expectation to receive what they asked of him: Otherwiſe to come to him for Cure, was no better than to *Tempt*, to Mock and Deride him; it was to ask what they did not believe he could beſtow; but they reſolv'd only to try what he could do, ſuppoſing that if they received no good, yet however there could be no hurt in the Experiment.

Now, can any Man think, that the Miracles which Chriſt wrought, were to be beſtowed upon no better Conſiderations than theſe? Or, that thoſe were in any meaſure worthy to be Cured, who came with ſo indifferent an Opinion of him, and with ſo little expectation of Relief? Chriſt wanted no opportunities of ſhewing his Power; he had ſhewn it in many and wonderful Inſtances, and would do it again as often as he ſaw occaſion, upon fit and proper Objects: But if they ſo little regarded what he had already done, as not to believe that he had done it, and could again perform the ſame, they but ill deſerved what they came for; the Divine Power and Goodneſs was not thus to be debaſed and expoſed, as to be employed in the Cure of Men, who asked, what they did not believe he could perform, but only thought it would coſt them nothing to make the Tryal, and for that Reaſon made Application to him. Our Saviour therefore ſays to the Father, who came to him

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in behalf of his Deaf and Dumb Son; *If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth*; and upon that humble and paſſionate Declaration, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*, the evil Spirit was caſt out of his Son, *Mark* ix. 23, 24.

The End and Deſign of Chriſt's Miracles required, that thoſe, who were Cured by him, ſhould believe in him. For they were wrought with a deſign to convince Men that he was the Son of God, and that he was come not ſo much to Cure their Bodies, as to ſave their Souls, and he forgave their Sins at the ſame time that he healed them of their Diſeaſes, *Mark* ii. 5. And ſince Faith is ſo neceſſary a Doctrine of the Goſpel, it was as requiſite that Chriſt ſhould teach this, as any other Doctrine: But how could he do it more properly and more effectually than by requiring Faith in thoſe who came to be healed? If they would partake of his Mercy, they muſt qualifie themſelves for it, by believing that he was the great Prophet and Meſſias, who was then ſo much expected, and of whom it was foretold, that he ſhould make *the Blind to ſee, and the Lame to walk, and the Deaf to hear*, &c. Luke vii. 22. Iſa. xxxv. 5. And unleſs their Bodily Cure did conduce to the Cure of their Souls by Faith and Repentance, it would be but ill beſtowed upon them, and therefore with great Reaſon might be denied them. And upon this Account, we find our Bleſſed Saviour both requiring Faith in ſome, and rewarding it in others, to whom his miraculous Power was extended, *Luke* viii. 48. xviii. 42. And St. *Paul perceiving* that the Cripple at *Lyſtra had Faith to be healed*, immediately healed him without being ask'd to do it, *Acts* xiv. 9.

2. Faith, in the Miracles of Chriſt, is required of Men in all Ages of the World, though Miracles are ceaſed; and if this be reaſonable now, it could not but be fitting then, that thoſe who came to Chriſt, ſhould believe in him for the ſake of the Miracles which

which they had been certified that he had done upon others. For Miracles, when they are fully atteſted, are as ſufficient a Ground of Faith, as if we had ſeen them done; and to manifeſt that they are ſo, our Saviour might require Belief in his former Miracles, of thoſe who expected any Advantage from ſuch as they deſired him to do. If they would give no Credit to the Miracles, which were ſo notorious, and ſo abundantly teſtified by Multitudes who ſaw them done, how ſhould others believe in Times to come, when no more Miracles ſhould be wrought for the Conviction of Unbelievers? Might no Man be required to believe, unleſs he ſaw the Miracles himſelf? Then how ſhould the Church ſubſiſt in future Ages, when Miracles would be no longer wrought, but were for great Reaſons to be with-held? We muſt now believe upon the Account of the Miracles which were then done; and why therefore ſhould they not be required to believe upon the Account of them, who lived at the very Time, and in the ſame Country where they were wrought, though they had never ſeen them? Our Saviour, in theſe Inſtances, might introduce that Method, and eſtabliſh the Evidence and Certainty of thoſe Means and Motives, whereby Faith was to be produced in Men of all ſucceeding Ages, and might hereby ſignifie and declare, that he requires the ſame Faith of us from the Teſtimony of others, that he would do, if we had ſeen and experienced his miraculous Power our ſelves.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the ceaſing of Prophecies and Miracles.

PRophecies are generally of more Concernment, and afford greater Evidence and Conviction in future Ages, than when they were firſt delivered. For it is not the Delivery, but the Accompliſhment of Prophecies, which gives Evidence to the Truth of any Doctrine: The Events of Things in the Accompliſhment of Prophecies are a ſtanding Argument to all Ages, and the length of Time adds to its Force and Efficacy; and therefore when all that God ſaw requiſite to be foretold, is deliver'd to us in the Scriptures, there can no longer be any need of New Prophecies; which would be of leſs Authority than the ancient ones, inaſmuch as their Antiquity is the thing chiefly to be regarded in Prophecies. For, if to foretel Things to come be an Argument of a Divine Preſcience, the longer Things are foretold before they come to paſs, the better muſt the Argument needs be. He therefore that requires New Prophecies to confirm the Old, little conſiders the Nature of Prophecies, and wherein the Evidence and Uſe of them lies; but in great Wiſdom and Caution will give no Credit to the beſt Evidence, unleſs there were ſomething leſs evident to prove it by.

The chief Enquiry then ſeems to be concerning the Ceſſation of Miracles; but from what has been elſewhere ſaid, the Reaſon may appear, why the miraculous Power, which the Apoſtles received by the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, was not to be of perpetual continuance in the Church, but was to ceaſe in future Ages. For the Cauſe and End of the Gift of Miracles beſtowed upon the Apoſtles, was to make them capable of being *Witneſſes* to Chriſt; and when the Goſpel

of Chriſt was ſufficiently teſtified, there could be no longer need of ſuch a Power, which was given to enable Men to bear Teſtimony to it. For what is once effectually proved by ſufficient Witneſſes, is for ever proved, and needs no after-Evidence, if this Proof be preſerved and tranſmitted down to Poſterity. The Power of Miracles continued till the Goſpel had been preached not only *in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria*, but *unto the utmoſt Parts of the Earth*; which was the declared Intention of our Saviour in beſtowing it, *Acts* i. 8. And when the Goſpel had ſtood all the Tryals, and conquered all the Oppoſition that could be made againſt it by *Jews*, and *Heathens*, and Apoſtates themſelves; when Miracles had been wrought for ſeveral Ages, before all ſorts of Men, upon all Occaſions, and had extorted a Confeſſion from the Devils themſelves of the Divine Power, by which they were wrought; when the Books of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, in which theſe Miracles are recorded, had been diſperſed in all Nations and Languages, ſo that it was impoſſible that the Memory of them ſhould be loſt; when once the Goſpel was thus divulged and atteſted to the World, it could not be neceſſary that this miraculous Power ſhould be any longer continued: Becauſe this is the only Reaſon and Deſign why Miracles ſhould be wrought, to awaken Mens Attention, and prepare them for the Reception of the Doctrine which is revealed, and convince them of the Truth of it.

If then it be enquired, Why the miraculous Gifts, which were at firſt beſtow'd upon the Church, were not continued to it in all ſucceeding Ages? The plain Anſwer is; Becauſe this Power was beſtowed for the Eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion in the World, by convincing Men of its Truth and Authority; and therefore, when a ſufficient Evidence had been given in all Parts of the World, of the Divine Authority of that Religion, upon the Account whereof theſe Gifts

Gifts were beſtowed, the Reaſon for the beſtowing of them muſt ceaſe, and the Reaſon why they ſhould be beſtowed ceaſing, theſe miraculous Gifts muſt of conſequence ceaſe with it. God appointed in the Church, *firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers; after that, Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diverſities of Tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. It appears, therefore, from the Order of the Inſtitution, that the miraculous Powers were inferior and ſubſervient not only to the Apoſtolick and Prophetick Office, but to that of the Preachers of the Goſpel. So that when the Doctrine was once fully taught and received, there could be no longer need of Miracles to recommend and enforce its Reception.

And thus it was likewiſe under the Law. It is obſervable, that we read of no miraculous Power beſtowed upon any Man before *Moſes*. The Creation of the World was delivered down with undeniable Certainty, and the miraculous Judgments of God in drowning the Old World, in the confuſion of Tongues, and in the Puniſhment inflicted upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, were ſufficient to keep up a Senſe of the True Religion. But when a new Inſtitution of Religion was to be introduced by *Moſes*, miraculous Gifts were neceſſary to give Authority to it, and to oppoſe thoſe falſe and lying Wonders which were in uſe among the Magicians in *Egypt* and other Places. In the former Ages Predictions were very frequent, and they were delivered by the Patriarchs, who were Men of unqueſtionable Credit and Authority, and could have no need of Miracles to confirm the truth of their Prophecies, which were ſo uſual in thoſe Times; and when the Lives of Men were ſo long, divers Prophecies of the ſame Perſons had been verified by the Event. But *Moſes* had a new Law to deliver, and both He and the Prophets had a ſtubborn People to deal with, to whom the Meſſage they were charged withal, was commonly very unwelcome; ſo that till

this Inſtitution was fully ſettled, Miracles became neceſſary.

But when the Old Teſtament had been ſufficiently authorized and eſtabliſhed by Prophecies and Miracles, and when by the Captivities and Diſperſions of the *Jews*, the Divine Miſſion of their Prophets became known among ſo many other Nations; when the *Jews* were reduced from Idolatry, which they never practiſed after their Return from their Captivity in *Babylon*; and when they had made numerous Converſions amongſt the Heathens, then theſe miraculous Gifts were no longer continued, as they had been before in the *Jewiſh* Church, inſomuch that it became a [a] Maxim among them, that after the Death of *Zechariah* and *Malachi*, and the reſt of the Prophets, who returned from *Babylon*, the Spirit of God departed from *Iſrael*, and aſcended; and, for above Four hundred Years together, the Gifts, both of Prophecy and Miracles, had been with-held from them, before the Manifeſtation of Chriſt. For though there were groſs Errors, and dangerous Corruptions among the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, and other Sects of the *Jews*; yet ſince the truth and certainty of that Revelation, from whence theſe Errors might have been confuted, had been ſo throughly confirmed; all their Corruptions and Errors were not a ſufficient cauſe for the continuance of miraculous Gifts; and the *Phariſees*, and other Sects, who were moſt fond and zealous of their ſeveral Tenets and Traditions, yet never durſt pretend to a Power of Miracles, or Prophecy; but endeavoured to ſupport themſelves upon the Authority of *Moſes*, and the Prophets. What they ſometimes ſpake of [b] the *Bath Col*, or Voice from Heaven, deſerves but little Credit, and amounts but to a Confeſſion; that the

[a] Lightf. Glean. *out of* Exod. §. vi. *Harm. of the Evang.* Luke i. 18. John ii. 18.

[b] Id. *Fall of* Jeruſalem, § IX. Harm. *of the* N. Teſt. §. LXXIII.

Spirit

Spirit of Prophecy had failed under the Second Temple, as the *Jews* themſelves expreſly acknowledge it to have done. [c] *Maimonides* declares, that the *Bath Col* did not denominate Men Prophets, and therefore it is not reckon'd by him among the Degrees of Prophecy.

I have already [d] proved at large, that the Evidence of thoſe Miracles, which were wrought in the Primitive Times, affords as much Certainty to our Faith, as if we our ſelves had ſeen them wrought. And our Saviour plainly ſays, notwithſtanding his *Works*, which *bore witneſs of him*, that it was not to be expected, that his own Words ſhould be rather believ'd than the Writings of *Moſes*. *For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his Writings, how ſhall ye believe my Words?* *John* v. 46, 47. And when once the Goſpel had been atteſted by Miracles as the Law had been, and rendred as certain to all ſucceeding Ages, as a conſtant Power of Miracles could have made it, there could be no Reaſon, why ſuch a Power ſhould be any longer beſtowed. Miracles were wrought in Evidence of the Truth of Revelations made to Mankind in the Old and New Teſtament, not to decide any Controverſies ariſing amongſt thoſe, by whom the Scriptures are receiv'd: For to them the Scriptures are the Rule, by which all Diſputes ought to be determin'd, and therefore the Gifts of Miracles were ſometimes manifeſted among [e] Hereticks for the Conviction of Infidels, which is the true end and deſign of Miracles, and not to be any Note of Diſtinction between the Orthodox and Hereticks.

The Learned Mr. [f] *Dodwell*, by an hiſtorical Account of Miracles from the Times of the Apoſtles through

[c] More Nevoch. P[t] ii. c. 36, 41. [d] *Book* I.
[e] Ad Orthodox. inter Juſtin. Martyr. Oper. Reſponſ. v.
[f] In Iren. Diſſert. xi. §. 28, &c.

the Ages next ſucceeding, has ſhewn, that they were always adapted to the Neceſſities of the Church, being more or leſs frequent, as the State of the Church required, till they at laſt wholly ceas'd, when there was no longer any need of them. For the only end and uſe of miraculous Gifts is the Confirmation and Eſtabliſhment of Religion; and therefore when this is once fully confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd, they can be no longer needful. But it ſeems rather neceſſary that they ſhould afterwards ceaſe, than that they ſhould be continued; I mean, as to any conſtant Power of working Miracles reſiding in the Church. For tho' there may poſſibly be ſome extraordinary Caſes, in which it may pleaſe God to manifeſt a miraculous Power, yet there is no Reaſon to conclude, that a conſtant Power of working Miracles ſhould be continued to the Church, but rather that thoſe Gifts ſhould ceaſe, when Religion has been confirm'd by a perpetual Courſe of Miracles for ſome Hundreds of Years together. Becauſe

I. Miracles, when they became common, would loſe the Deſign and End, and the very Nature of Miracles. For the Nature of Miracles conſiſts in this, that they are an extraordinary Work of God; not that they are more difficult, than the ordinary Works of Nature: All things are alike eaſy to God, and Miracles are as eaſy as any thing in the conſtant Courſe of Nature can be; the only difference is, that Miracles are his wonderful Work, they are more apt to raiſe our Wonder and Admiration, and to put us in mind of a Divine Preſence. For we wonder at ſtrange and unuſual things, and ſuppoſe a more than ordinary Reaſon for them. But if Miracles had continued in all Ages, this Effect of Miracles would have ceas'd, and they would no longer have been Miracles, but a kind of different Courſe of Nature. For, according to the beſt and moſt accurate Philoſophy, nothing in the ſettled Courſe of Nature can be perform'd without

out an immediate Influence of the Divine Power; but in Miracles this Power manifests it self in an extraordinary manner, above and contrary to the Established Laws, or Rules, which God has in all other cases prescribed for the producing Effects.

II. Men would fancy to themselves some kind of Scheme, or other, and would frame some Notions and Conceits to give an Account of Miracles; or they would imagine them to return of course at certain Periods, or upon some Accidents, if they saw them frequently done, or perhaps they would suppose them to proceed from some defect in the Nature of Things, which could not always keep its Course, but made many Deviations from it. But when Miracles were wrought only in some Ages for peculiar Reasons, this shews that they were done by an immediate Divine Power, with a particular Design, which could be no other, than the Confirmation of Religion, since they ceas'd both under the Law and the Gospel, when both were fully declar'd and confirm'd.

III. A perpetual Power of Miracles in all Ages would give occasion to continual Impostures, which would confound and distract Mens Minds, and would make the true Miracles themselves suspected. The pretended [g] Prophecies of *Montanus* and other Hereticks had never gain'd that Credit, which they met withal, but because miraculous Gifts were then still continued in divers Churches. And we see now, that the Dreams of every Enthusiast, and the Pretences of every Impostor are apt to startle weak Minds, though we have so much Reason not to expect Miracles, or Revelations. But if we were in constant expectation of True Miracles, the False would be much more like-

[g] Πλεῖσαι γὰρ καὶ ἄλλαι ψευδοδοξοποιαὶ τῆ θείᾳ χαείσμαλῶ εἰσέτι τότε κατὰ διαφόρους ἐκκλησίας ἐπελέλυμψαι, πίστιν ψευδῆ πολλοῖς τῶν κρείνεις περφηδεύειν παρεῖχον, Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 3.

ly to miſlead many, and to make others reject the Belief of any Miracles at all.

If Prophecies and Miracles had been frequent in the *Jewiſh* Church to the Coming of our Saviour, his Prophecies and wonderful Works had not ſo well diſtinguiſhed and manifeſted him to be the Chriſt. But when after ſo long an Intermiſſion, they were again revived in him, this ſhew'd him to be the great Prophet and *Meſſias* who was expected. And it is very obſervable, that as Miracles had been diſcontinued for a long time among the *Jews*; ſo St. *John Baptiſt*, who was more than a Prophet, and as great as any of all the Men that had been before Chriſt; yet wrought no Miracles, that he might be the better diſtinguiſh'd from the *Meſſias*, and that there might ariſe no Doubt in the Minds of any, which of them was the Chriſt. And when our Saviour had been acknowledg'd to be the Chriſt in all parts of the World, it was fit that Miracles ſhould ceaſe, to preſerve the Authority due to the Miracles wrought by himſelf, and his Diſciples; it being more for the Honour of Chriſt, that the Miracles wrought in his Name ſhould ceaſe, when his Religion had been fully eſtabliſhed, than that Men ſhould be tempted to doubt who was the true Chriſt, and which was the true Religion, upon the account of Falſe Miracles wrought in oppoſition to the True.

IV. Another Reaſon why the Gift of Miracles has been with-held in latter Ages may be this; becauſe ſince there has been a general Depravation of Manners among Chriſtians, it would have prov'd a great occaſion of Pride and Vain-Glory to thoſe who had poſſeſt it, as we find it was to ſome even in the times of the Apoſtles, 1 *Cor.* xii. xiv. And our Saviour ſaw it requiſite to give a Caution to his Diſciples, *Notwithſtanding in this rejoice not, that the Spirits are ſubject unto you, but rather rejoice, becauſe your Names are written in Heaven*, Luke x. 20. It muſt be an eminent and truly Primitive Piety, that could bear the having of

ſuch Gifts with an humble and Chriſtian Temper of Mind.

It is an Obſervation of [h] my Lord *Bacon*'s, That *there was never Miracle wrought by God to convert an Atheiſt, becauſe the Light of Nature might have led him to confeſs a God: But Miracles are deſigned to convert Idolaters, and the Superſtitious, who have aeknowledged a Deity, but erred in his Adoration; becauſe no Light of Nature extends to declare the Will and true Worſhip of God.* For the ſame Reaſon, when once the true Religion is confirm'd in ſuch a manner, as to have the ſame Evidence for it, which there is for the Exiſtence of God himſelf, Miracles are no more to be expected to convert an Infidel, than to convert an Atheiſt. Among Men of Learning and Reaſon there ought to be no more doubt of the Truth of the Goſpel, than of the Being of a God, and they without the help of Miracles may inſtruct others. [i] *Acoſta* enquiring into the Cauſe, why Miracles are not wrought by the preſent Miſſionaries for the Converſion of Heathen Nations, as they were by the Chriſtians of the Primitive Ages, gives this as one Reaſon, becauſe the Chriſtians at firſt were ignorant Men, and the Gentiles learned; but now on the contrary all the Learning in the World is employ'd for the Defence of the Goſpel, and there is nothing but Ignorance to oppoſe it; and there can be no need of farther Miracles in behalf of ſo good a Cauſe, when it is in the Hands of ſuch able Advocates, againſt ſo weak Adverſaries.

However, though there be no ſuch Change as was wont formerly to be wrought in the viſible Courſe of Nature, in Confirmation of our Religion, yet there is ſtill a Divine Power evident among Chriſtians living in Heathen Countries. For the Devil, who tyrannizeth over the Heathens, has no Power over Chriſtians

[h] *Advan. of Learn.* l. iii. c. 2.
[i] De Procur. Indor. Salute, l. ii. c. 9.

dwelling

dwelling among them; of which the *Indians* have taken great Notice, and have [k] declared the Chriſtians happy in being freed from the Tortures of Wicked Spirits, by which they find themſelves often ſeiz'd on the ſudden in a terrible manner, and *ſtand in perpetual fear of them.* [l] *Chriſtians they do acknowledge to have a Prerogative above themſelves, and not to be under the Power of theſe Infernal Spirits.* It is ſo generally related by Travellers of all Profeſſions, both Proteſtants and Papiſts, that the Devil exerciſes a manifeſt Tyranny over the Heathens, but is able to do nothing to the Chriſtians abiding amongſt them; that this cannot be denied to be a plain Argument of a Divine Power diſcovering it ſelf in Confirmation of the Chriſtian Religion, though not by ſuch Miracles as were formerly wrought, becauſe there is no longer any need of them.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the Cauſes why the Jews *and* Gentiles *rejected* Chriſt, *notwithſtanding all the Miracles wrought by Him and his Apoſtles.*

THough the Chriſtian Religion be moſt certain in it ſelf, yet there is a Supernatural Grace required to make us throughly and effectually convinced of the Certainty of it. *No Man can come to me,* ſays our Saviour, *except the Father, which hath ſent me, draw him*; and this is declar'd to be the Reaſon of the Infidelity of ſuch as were offended at his Doctrine, and departed from him. *But there are ſome of you that believe not: for Jeſus knew from the beginning who they*

[k] Lerii Hiſtor. Navig. in Braſil. c. xvi.
[l] *Capt.* Knoxe's *Hiſt. of* Ceylon, P[r] iii. c. 4.

were

were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him; and he ſaid, Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no Man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of my Father, John vi. 64, 65. So that the Belief of the Goſpel is ſtyled a *Divine Faith*, not only in reſpect of its Object, but of its efficient Cauſe. In attaining to the Knowledge of the Truth of Religion, we muſt proceed upon the ſame Principles of Reaſon, by which we proceed in attaining to the Knowledge of any other Truth. But Reaſon, when it comes up to the Evidence even of Demonſtration, tho' it ſatisfies the Underſtanding, yet doth not neceſſarily gain that firm and laſting Aſſent of the Will, which is required in Faith; but when the thing prov'd to be true, is unacceptable, againſt the Inclinations of the Will, and againſt the former Opinions and Perſuaſions of the Underſtanding, the preſent Convictions of the Underſtanding are ſoon ſtifled and overpower'd by the prevailing Force of the Will and Affections, which carry the Mind off to other and contrary Objects, which it has been wont to think of and believe. Thus it was in the *Academicks* and *Scepticks*; they could not but have the ſame Senſe of Mathematical Demonſtrations, and other clear Truths, which the reſt of Mankind have, whilſt they thought of them, and attended ſtrictly to them: But by a conſtant Practice to amuſe themſelves with Subtilties, they had wrought themſelves to a Perſuaſion, that nothing could be certainly known to be true; and this general and habitual Opinion ſoon ſtifled the Evidence of any particular Truth, which could be repreſented never ſo clearly to their Minds.

To as many therefore as lay under long and violent Prejudices, by reaſon of their former Opinions, and of their Pride and Vanity in contending for them; or by reaſon of any of thoſe Luſts, which are ſo contrary to the Purity of the Goſpel; to ſuch, an extraordinary and miraculous Power of Grace was neceſſary to eſtabliſh them in the Faith, or elſe, though they be-

believed for the preſent at the ſight of ſome Miracle, yet this was no laſting or well-grounded Faith: *Many believed in his name, when they ſaw the Miracles which he did: but Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all Men*, John ii. 23, 24. And that Grace, which was neceſſary to their Faith, was deny'd to ſome for their Sins, *that they ſhould not ſee with their Eyes, nor underſtand with their Heart, and be converted*, John xii. 40. So that Men of great Learning and worldly Wiſdom might ſtill continue Unbelievers, and not ſubmit to all the Evidence of the Goſpel, becauſe the Doctrine of the Goſpel being ſo contrary to their habitual Thoughts and Inclinations, there was ſomething neceſſary to convert the Will and Affections, and to ſubdue the former Habits which had been rooted in their Minds by frequent Acts and length of Time, and which were too ſtrong for any Convictions of the Underſtanding, that conſiſted but in tranſient Acts, and were ſoon loſt and vaniſhed, through the prevailing contrary Habits both of the Underſtanding, and Will, and Affections. And therefore Faith muſt neceſſarily be an Effect of Grace as well as of Reaſon; and where, becauſe of former Sins and Provocations, this Grace was not vouchſafed, there could be no Faith, though there might be ſome tranſient Convictions of Mind, ſome faint Glimmerings, which were ſoon damp'd and extinguiſh'd, being overpower'd by former contrary Perſuaſions. And for the ſame Reaſon, thoſe who had leſs Wiſdom and Knowledge, but were not under the Power of habitual Luſts and Paſſions, and therefore were more eaſily perſuaded to any thing, of the Truth whereof they were once convinced, were likewiſe the more eaſily converted.

The Cauſes why the Word became unfruitful, and ſo little prevail'd with many Men, are in the Parable of the *Sower* declar'd to be either inconſiderate Negligence and Ignorance, and the Advantage taken from thence

thence by Satan; or want of Conſtancy in Times of *Tribulations* and *Perſecutions*; or *the Cares of this World, and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches*; *and the Luſts of other things*, Matth. xiii. 18. Mark iv. 9. It was next to an impoſſibility *for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God*, or to become a Chriſtian. They were not Natural ſo much as Moral Accompliſhments, not ſo much Parts and Learning, as an honeſt and humble Mind, which were the requiſite Qualifications for Men to become Chriſtians: Becauſe, as God the more freely beſtowed his Grace upon Men thus qualified, ſo they were the better diſpoſed to be wrought upon by it; whereas others, though they wanted a greater meaſure of Grace, yet had leſs vouchſafed to them. For *God reſiſteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble.*

Thus much in the general; I now proceed to give a particular Account of the Cauſes of the Unbelief both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles.*

I. Since there is ſo great Evidence, that our Saviour is the true Chriſt, it may ſeem a wonderful and almoſt an incredible thing, that the *Jews* ſhould ſo generally reject him, notwithſtanding all the Means and Opportunities which they had above other Nations of being converted. But,

1. The *Jews* and Proſelytes were converted in vaſt Numbers. Beſides the Shepherds, *Simon*, and *Anna* the Propheteſs, acknowledged and adored our Saviour in his Infancy, as the true *Meſſias*, Luke ii. 25, 36. and it is probably [a] ſuppoſed that this was *Rabban Simeon*, the Son of *Hillel*, and Father of *Gamaliel*. The Title of *Rabban* was the higheſt of all Titles, ſignifying a Prince rather than a Doctor or Teacher, as *Rabbi* doth; and there were but Seven of the Poſterity of *Hillel* who were dignified with it. *Nicodemus*, *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, and many others of Note and

[a] Buxtorf. de Abbrev. Hebr.

Eminency

Eminency received the Chriſtian Faith. *About Three Thouſand* were converted at one time, *Acts* ii. 41. Great Numbers were converted not only of the People, but of the *Prieſts* alſo, *Acts* vi. 7. *All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron*, Acts ix. 35. *A great number* of the *Grecians*, or [b] *Helleniſts*, who were *Jews*, ſpeaking the *Greek* Tongue, *believed, and turned unto the Lord*, at *Antioch*, Acts xi. 21. *Many of the Jews and Religious Proſelytes followed Paul and Barnabas*, Acts xiii. 43. *A great multitude of the* [c] *devout Greeks*, or Proſelytes of the Gates, conſorted with *Paul* and *Silas* at *Theſſalonica*, Acts xvii. 4. At *Iconium*, *a great multitude of the Jews believed*, Acts xiv. 1. Believers *of the Sect of the Phariſees* at *Jeruſalem*, Acts xv. 5. *Criſpus, chief Ruler of the Synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his Houſe*, Acts xviii. 8. And *Soſthenes*, another *chief Ruler of the Synagogue*, Acts xviii. 19. 1 Cor. i. 1. *Apollos, an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures*, was a Chriſtian, *Acts* xviii. 24. *Many Thouſands* (or Myriads in the *Greek*) Acts xxi. 20. And *the number of them which were ſealed*, was *an Hundred and forty and four thouſand of all the Tribes of the Children of Iſrael*, Rev. vii. 4. The People were generally well diſpoſed to receive the Goſpel; and when the Chief Prieſts and Rulers would have perſecuted our Saviour and his Apoſtles, they were often forced to deſiſt for fear of the People. And if the Apoſtles did not depart [d] from *Jeruſalem* in the ſpace of twelve Years, (as there is reaſon to believe) the number of Converts in all that time muſt needs be extremely

[b] Ἑλληνισταὶ, conſtantly rendred *Grecians* in our Tranſlation, and Ἕλληνες *Greeks*.

[c] Σεβόμενοι προσήλυτοι, Acts xiii. 43. *Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs.* Σεβόμενοι Ἕλληνες, and οἱ Σεβόμενοι, Acts xvii. 4, 17. *Proſelytes of the Gates:* ſuch as *Cornelius*, Εὐσεβὴς, καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν, Acts x. 2. Theſe ſeem to be ſtyled only *devout Greeks*, and *devout Perſons*, becauſe they were not ſo properly Proſelytes as the other, but were then in no good opinion with the *Jews*.

[d] Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. v. c. 18. Clem. Strom. l. 6.

great. The Church of *Jeruſalem* flouriſhed exceedingly from the Beginning, and the Biſhops of that *City* were of the Nation of the *Jews* for [e] fifteen Succeſſions, even to the final deſtruction of it by *Hadrian*. St. *James*, the firſt Biſhop of that See, reſided there, by [f] St. *Jerom*'s computation, thirty Years; and the Preſence and Government of a Biſhop ſo generally eſteemed by the *Jews*, could not fail of a very good and great Effect in the Converſion of that People. Many, even of the Rulers, being converted, the Scribes and Phariſees made their complaints, that the whole City of *Jeruſalem* would turn Chriſtians, as [g] *Hegeſippus*, who was himſelf a converted *Jew*, informs us; and the Phariſees ſaid of our Saviour, when he was upon Earth, *Behold, the World is gone after him*, John xii. 19. The Martyrdom of St. *James*, in the midſt of *Jeruſalem*, at the time of the Paſſover, was the moſt publick and illuſtrious Teſtimony to the Goſpel that could be given, and the moſt proper means that could be uſed, to cure the Infidelity of that City before its Deſtruction. [h] St. *Simeon*, who ſucceeded St. *James* in the Biſhoprick of *Jeruſalem*, ſuffered Martyrdom at the Age of a Hundred and Twenty Years, and he was Biſhop there [i] about Forty three Years. So that the Church of *Jeruſalem* was governed by thoſe Two Biſhops above Seventy Years, which was the ſignal Favour of a merciful Providence to the *Jews*, and was not without very great and happy Succeſs. The Epiſtles of St. *Peter* and St. *James*, and that of St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews*, purpoſely directed to the *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, ſhew that their Converſions were very numerous both in *Judea* and in other Countries. [k] *Euſebius* takes particular notice of the Mul-

[e] Id. lib. iv. c. 5. Sulp. Sever. lib. ii. c. 45.
[f] Hier. Catal. [g] Euſeb. ib. lib. ii. c. 23.
[h] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 11, 32.
[i] Tilm. Memoir. Tom. 2. Part. 2. p. 37.
[k] Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. iii. c. 35.

titudes

titudes of Believing *Jews* in the Biſhoprick of *Jeruſalem*, when *Juſtus*, the Third Biſhop, ſucceeded to that See. And [l] at *Antioch*, and *Rome*, and *Epheſus*, there was one Biſhop of the converted *Jews*, and another of the *Gentiles*, and, as Dr. *Hammond* ſuppoſes, at *Jeruſalem* likewiſe, but there is little proof of it. There ſeems, however, to have been a cuſtom of placing Two Biſhops, one of the Circumciſion, and another of the Uncircumciſion, in all Cities, where the *Jews* were in any great Number mix'd with the *Gentiles*; [m] *Alexandria* excepted, where *Epiphanius* ſays, there never were Two Biſhops, as in other Cities. And ſome of the moſt Learned *Jews* have been converted, not only in theſe Times, but in latter Ages. *Epiphanius* was brought up in the Jewiſh Religion, as the Greek *Menology* teſtifies, and he acquaints us, that [n] *Ellel*, the Jewiſh Patriarch, ſent for a Biſhop to baptize him upon his Death-Bed. *Samuel Morochianus*, *Petrus Alphonſus*, *Paulus Burgenſis*, *Nicolas de Lyra*, *Petrus Galatinus*, *Sixtus Senenſis*, *Tremellius*, and other Learned Men educated in the Jewiſh Worſhip, upon their Converſion, have been eminent Defenders of the Chriſtian Religion. *Hieronymus à S. Fide*, after his Converſion, is ſaid to have brought over many Thouſands to Chriſtianity. But it is obſervable, that the *Rabbins* of the greateſt Note and Authority with the *Jews*, *Maimonides*, *Solomon Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and *David* and *Joſeph Kimchi*, flouriſhed in the moſt ignorant and corrupt Ages of the Chriſtian Church, when Chriſtians, by their ſuperſtitious and erroneous Doctrines and wicked Lives, had brought their Religion into contempt both with *Jews* and *Mahometans*, who then were more learned than in any other Age.

[l] *See Mr.* Thornd. *of the Primit. Government of the Churches*, c. 5. *and* Dr. Hammond *on St.* John, *Epiſt.* 2. *and* Rev. xi. 3.

[m] Epiphan. Hær. 68. n. 6. Pearſ. in Ignat. p. 186.

[n] Epiphan. Hær. 30. n. 4.

And

And many of the *Samaritans* as well as the *Jews* believed, *John* iv. 39, 40. and *were baptized both Men and Women*, even *Simon Magus* himſelf, *Acts* viii. 12, 13.

2. Many, even *among the chief Rulers*, were convinced, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, who durſt not own him, *John* xii. 42, 43. But the Love of Riches, and the Praiſe of Men, made them diſſemble their Convictions, and act againſt their Conſciences, as we ſee too many amongſt us act againſt their own Knowledge, and avowed Principles, every day.

3. Many had blaſphemed the Holy Ghoſt, and thereby rendred themſelves uncapable of the Mercies of the Goſpel; and others, by their other great Impieties, had brought themſelves to ſuch an impenitent ſtate, that their *Eyes* were *blinded*, and their *hearts hardned, that they ſhould not ſee with their Eyes, nor underſtand with their Heart, and be converted*, John xii. 40. *Acts* xxviii. 25. *Rom.* xi. 8. And this ſeems to have been one Reaſon, why Chriſt commanded his Diſciples to conceal his Perſon, and to ſay nothing of his Transfiguration till his Reſurrection, *Matth.* xvi. 20. xvii. 9. that he might diſcover himſelf by degrees, and that the *Jews* might gradually be prepared to acknowledge him, and not ſin, beyond all poſſibility of Converſion, before his Reſurrection, and the manifeſtation of the Power of the Holy Ghoſt in the Apoſtles, which was the laſt means of Salvation, and thoſe, who rejected this, were ſelf-condemned, and *judged themſelves unworthy of everlaſting Life*, Acts xiii. 46. or, in effect, they denounced the Sentence of Damnation againſt themſelves. In the judgment of *Joſephus*, no Nation in any Age was ever ſo wicked as the *Jews* of his time were: he ſays, that God, [o] for their Sins, hardned their Hearts, to their Deſtruction;

[o] Ἐπισκότῃ γὰρ αὐτῶν τὴν γνώμας διὰ τὰς παρανομίας ὁ Θεὸς. Joſ. de Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 10. Θεὸς γὰρ ὧν ὁ τῶν λαῶν πανδὸς καταλυτὴς, καὶ πᾶσι αὐτοῖς ζωηρείας ὁδὸν, εἰς ἀπώλειαν ἀποτρέφων.

that he had paſs'd the Sentence of Condemnation upon the whole People; and that he believes, if the *Roman* Army had not come, the Earth would have ſwallowed up the City, or a Deluge would have deſtroyed it, or it would have been conſumed, like *Sodom*, by Fire from Heaven. Among ſo wicked a People, it is no wonder that Converſions were not more general; and that thoſe, whom *Titus* could not perſuade to ſave their Lives, would not be prevailed upon by the Apoſtles, for the Salvation of their Souls.

4. The *Jews* had violent Prejudices againſt the Goſpel, out of Zeal to their Law, and to their Traditions, which were in ſo much eſteem and veneration amongſt them, they feared that their believing in Chriſt might prove an occaſion to the *Romans* to come and deſtroy them. *If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him, and the* Romans *ſhall come, and take away both our Place and Nation*, John xi. 48. And to prevent this, the Chief Prieſts, and the Phariſees, in Council, agreed to the Expedient propoſed by *Caiaphas*, of putting Chriſt to death, imagining, that would effectually put a ſtop to the ſpreading of his Doctrine among the People, who, above all things, could not endure to hear of Chriſt crucified; for they had general and earneſt Expectations of a temporal *Meſſias*, whom not only their own carnal Hearts inclined them to hope for, but their Religion, as they imagined, commanded them to expect. And the Family of the famous *Hillel* being in ſo much Power and Authority at that time, might be a great inducement to them, to confirm them in their hopes, and to harden them againſt the Belief of a Crucified *Meſſias*. For [p] *Hillel* himſelf held the Government, or Preſidentſhip, of the

φων. c. 15. Οἶμαι Ῥωμαίων βεβδωόντων ἐπὶ τὴν ἁλίπεδιν, ἢ καλαποθῶαι ἂν ὑπὸ χάσμαλ⊖, ἢ καλακλυδῶαι ἢ πόλιν, ἢ τὸν ἅ Σοδομιωῖς μέλμαβεῖν κεραυνὸς· πολὺ γὸ τ ταῦτα παθόνλων ἤνεγκε χλεαν ἀθεωέραν. c. 16.

[p] Lightf. Hebr. & Talmud. Exercit. in Matth. xi. 1.

Sanhedrim

Sanhedrim Forty Years, and his Son and Grandſons after him in a continual Succeſſion, for an Hundred Years before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem:* So that the Splendor and Pomp of this Family of *Hillel*, ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*, had ſo obſcured the reſt of the Families of *David*'s Stock, that perhaps they believed, or expected the leſs, that the *Meſſias* ſhould ſpring from any of them; and one of their *Rabbins*, in the *Babylonian Gemera*, was almoſt perſuaded, that *Rabbi Judah*, of the Family of *Hillel*, was indeed the *Meſſias*. They were all very unwilling to find him in ſo low and afflicted a Condition, when the Luſtre of this Family had for ſo long a time attracted their Sight and Expectation; inſomuch that *Rabban Simeon*, the Son of *Hillel*, is but ſlightly mentioned, and not with that *Encomium*, with which the reſt of that Family are wont to be celebrated by the *Jewiſh* Writers; for this Reaſon, [q] if *Buxtorf* be not miſtaken, becauſe he was the ſame *Simeon* who declared our Saviour to be the Chriſt.

Tho the *Jews* muſt have been convinced (if they would have attended to them) by all manner of other Means and Evidence, that Jeſus was the *Meſſias*, yet they eſteemed Temporal Pomp and Grandeur ſo eſſential to the Perſon and Character of the *Meſſias*, that they thought the meanneſs of our Saviour's Condition, and the Ignominy of his Death, was ſufficient to overthrow all the Arguments which they could poſſible have, of his being the Chriſt; indeed their Minds were ſo fix'd upon this miſtaken Indication, that they little regarded any other.

This bred in them that Ignorance, which was truly very culpable, but which yet was taken notice of in their Favour, as ſome mitigation of ſo heinous a Crime, as the crucifying of the Son of God, *Luke* xxiii. 34. *Acts* iii. 17. xiii. 27. 1 *Cor.* xi. 8. But

[q] De Abbrev. Hebr.

withal, it made them exceeding obſtinate and deaf to all the Arguments that could be offered to convince them. When St. *Stephen* had anſwered their Accuſations, and fully argued the caſe with them, *they gnaſhed on him with their Teeth, and cried out with a loud Voice, and ſtop'd their Ears, and ran upon him, and ſtoned him*, Acts vii. 54, 57. And when St. *Paul* had declared in all particulars, how he was converted, and appealed to the *High Prieſt*, and to the *Eſtate of the Elders*, for the truth in part of what he related; yet the People, in a Rage and Tumult, *lift up their Voices, and ſaid, Away with ſuch a Fellow from the Earth, for it is not fit that he ſhould live; they cried out, and caſt off their Clothes, and threw Duſt into the Air*, Acts xxii. 22, 23. Theſe are not the Actions of reaſonable Men; no wonder, therefore, that they were not convinced by Reaſon.

5. *Falſe Chriſts* and *falſe Prophets*, with their *Signs and Wonders*, were then very frequent, *inſomuch that if it had been poſſible, they would have deceived the very Elect*, Matth. xxiv. 24. And the *Jews* were much more enclined to give credit to theſe, who complied with their Luſts and Deſires, than to examine and conſider the cleareſt Evidence, which muſt oblige them to take up the Croſs, and follow a Crucified Saviour. The Croſs of Chriſt was *to the Jews a Stumbling-block*, and they would believe any thing rather than it.

6. Another thing, which ſeems to have been a great hindrance to the Converſion of the *Jews*, was the cuſtom in their Synagogues of the reading the Old Teſtament only in the *Hebrew* Tongue, when it was not underſtood by the People; This cauſed a long contention among the *Jews*, till [r] *Juſtinian*, to decide the Controverſy, commanded that they ſhould be permitted to read the Bible in the *Greek*, or any other Language, which they underſtood: and tho' he re-

[r] Novell. 146. Tit. 29. c. 1.

com-

commended the *Septuagint*, yet he allowed them *Aquila*'s Verſion, but ſuffered not the uſe of their *Deuteroſis* or *Miſna*, which was contrived purpoſely to put a falſe ſenſe upon the Scriptures, whilſt they were read in an unknown Tongue.

7. Upon theſe, and ſuch like Cauſes, the *Jews* rejected their *Meſſias*, and ſtill continue in Unbelief, whereby are fulfilled many Prophecies concerning this very thing; and whilſt they endeavour, in vain, to diſprove all other Arguments, their Infidelity and Obſtinacy it ſelf is an Argument againſt them; the Prophets having foretold, that they would thus reject their *Meſſias*, as St. *Paul* proves, *Rom.* ix. 27. And it was no new, or ſtrange thing, that the *Jews* ſhould *reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*; they *always* did it, as St. *Stephen* tells them, *as your Fathers did, ſo do ye: Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers perſecuted? And they have ſlain them, which ſhewed before of the Coming of the Juſt One, of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murtherers*, Acts vii. 55, 52.

II. What great Numbers of the Heathen Nations, in all parts of the World, were converted to the Chriſtian Religion, is evident both from Chriſtian and Heathen Authors of thoſe Ages, in which the Goſpel was firſt preached; and conſidering the general depravation both of the Manners and Principles of thoſe Times, it is no wonder that many ſhould be contented with any Religion, or with no Religion at all, ſo that they might retain their Vices, rather than attend to any Arguments, which could be brought in proof of a Religion, that muſt oblige them to abandon and crucifie all their Luſts and Sins, and renounce their Eaſe and Safety, to live in Diſgrace and Miſery, and die in Torments. However, notwithſtanding all theſe Diſcouragements, there was no Rank, nor Order of Men, nor Sect of Philoſophers, but divers of the beſt and wiſeſt of them were early Converts to the Chriſtian Faith, ſuch as *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*;

Juſtin Martyr, *Athenagoras*, *Tertullian*, *Arnobius*, and others. And as nothing but the clear Evidence and Force of Truth could convert theſe, ſo it is no unaccountable thing, that others ſhould ſtand out and oppoſe it. For,

I. *The Greeks ſought after Wiſdom*; they were only for high and ſubtil Speculations, and were ſo poſſeſs'd with their own Notions, and a Conceit of themſelves, that they would give no Attention to a company of ignorant Men, who told them a plain Truth, of one that had been Crucified, and roſe again from the Dead. *Chriſt crucified* was *unto the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks Fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 22, 23. Nor was the Croſs only of Chriſt made a matter of Scandal and Offence, but his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion were thought impoſſible; it [a] was ſuppoſed *a thing incredible, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead*, (Acts xxvi. 8.) and no leſs incredible, that he ſhould, or could beſtow upon Men eternal Life.

The ſeveral Tenets of Philoſophy then in vogue, were a great obſtruction to all ſuch as thought themſelves skilled in them, to hinder them from becoming Chriſtians; and we find that ſome of them, after their Converſion, could not ſoon lay aſide all their Philoſophical Notions. The *Epicureans*, a confident and vain Sect, would receive nothing that could be ſaid to them of a Reſurrection and another Life, but with Scorn and Contempt: *And ſome ſaid, What will this Babler ſay? And when they heard of the Reſurrection of the Dead, ſome mocked*, Acts xvii. 18, 32. The *Platoniſts* held a Revolution of all Things into their former ſtate, in ſome certain term of Years, and therefore they, by their own Principles, muſt look upon all only as a Conſequence of ſuch a Revolution and

[a] Imperfectæ verò in homine naturæ præcipua ſolatia, ne Deum quidem poſſe omnia. Namque nec ſibi poteſt mortem conſciſcere, ſi velit, ——— Nec mortales æternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos. Plin. Hiſt. l. 2. 7.

Period

Period of Time. The *Peripateticks* were perſuaded, that the World is eternal, and therefore laugh'd at thoſe who ſeemed to them to teach, that it was now juſt at an end, and declared, that it had a beginning not many thouſands of Years before. The *Stoicks*, who mightily improved the Moral Part of Philoſophy, by borrowing from the Chriſtian Doctrine, yet holding that all things are under an inevitable Fate and Deſtiny, had ſuch a perpetual curb upon them, as left them no liberty to think of changing their Opinions; one of which was, that there is nothing Immaterial; a plain Contradiction to the Fundamental Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion.

Beſides, there was a great deal of Pride in the very Compoſition of a *Stoick*. It [t] appears from the Account which *Arrian* has given of *Epictetus*, that neither the Jewiſh Law, nor the Chriſtian Religion, was unknown to him; for in the Diſcourſes which he has preſerved of *Epictetus*, we find him ſometimes uſing the ſame words with the Scriptures. But it appears likewiſe from thoſe Diſcourſes, that *Epictetus* was a great Admirer of *Diogenes* the Cynick, and imitated him in his Pride and Haughtineſs. For, magnifying himſelf as one ſent by God to be an Example to the World, and to prove that the high Sayings of the *Stoicks* are not vain Boaſts, but real and practicable Truths, he at laſt thus concludes, "How "do I converſe, ſays he, with theſe Men, whom you "fear and admire? Do not I treat them as Slaves? "Who, when he ſees me, doth not think he ſees his "King and his Maſter? There could be little hope, that ſuch a Man ſhould be wrought upon by a Religion which enjoineth, That *in lowlineſs of mind each eſteem other better than themſelves*, Phil. ii. 3. [u] *Seneca*,

[t] Arrian. Epict. lib. iii. c. 22.

[u] —— Prope eſt a te Deus, tecum eſt, intus eſt. Ita dico, Lucili, ſacer intra nos ſpiritus ſedet, bonorum, malorumque noſtrorum obſervator & cuſtos, &c. Senec. Epiſt. 41.

in ſome places, writes as if he had been tranſcribing the Scriptures, but he is not always the ſame, and he likewiſe diſcovers a ſtrange Vanity and Conceit of himſelf and his own Writings. For citing a Paſſage of *Epicurus*, where he told his Friend, That if he deſired Glory, his Letters ſhould make him more famous than all thoſe things which he eſteemed, or for which he was eſteemed. [x] *Seneca* aſſures *Lucilius*, That he could promiſe him as much as *Epicurus* had done his Friend: For he ſhould be Famous in future Times; and could raiſe and perpetuate the Fame of whomſoever he pleaſed. But it ſeems moſt of all ſtrange, that the excellent Emperor *M. Antoninus*, who had ſo much of the Chriſtian Morality, both in the Speculation, and in the Practice of it, ſhould not alſo be of the Chriſtian Faith, eſpecially, if he owned, that a ſignal Miracle was by the Prayers of the Chriſtians, obtained for the deliverance of himſelf, and his whole Army, as [y] *Tertullian*, who could not be ignorant of the truth of it, declares. And [z] *Apollinaris*, Biſhop of *Hierapolis*, who preſented an Apology to this Emperor, mentioned the ſame Miracle.

But it ſhould be conſidered, that [a] *M. Antoninus* was very ſuperſtitious in all the Heathen Worſhip, and was ſo much addicted to the [b] *Sophiſts* of his time, as not only to endure, but often to humour their Inſolence and Vanity; and from them he had his Notions of Philoſophy, which agree with the Chriſtian Doctrine, and not from the Scriptures. For he owns in his Book, from whom he had received his Precepts; but if he had read and conſidered the Scriptures, he could never have looked upon the Zeal and Fortitude of the Chriſtian Martyrs, as [c] Obſtinacy. But the *Sophiſts*, who made it their buſineſs to oppoſe the Go-

[x] Epiſt. 21. [y] Apol. c. 5. ad Scap. c. 4.
[z] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 5. [a] Am. Marcellin. l. 25. c. 4.
[b] Philoſtr. Vit. Sophiſt. in Herod. Hermag. Ariſtid. Adrian.
[c] Lib. xi. §. 3.

ſpel,

ſpel, knew, they could not better recommend themſelves to him, than by teaching its moral Doctrines, and preventing that eſteem, which he muſt needs have had of the Chriſtian Religion, if he had known, that to this, thoſe Doctrines, which he ſo much admired, owed either their Original or Improvement.

Whatever Opinion he had of the Chriſtians, he was wont to attribute too much to his own [d] Virtue and Piety, to aſcribe his Deliverance wholly to their Prayers. And after all the Praiſes, which have been juſtly given to *M. Antoninus*, it muſt be acknowledged, that he valued himſelf extreamly upon Two Things, which were very great hindrances to his Reception of the Goſpel, *viz.* The [e] Study of Philoſophy, and the Love and Eſteem of his People. For it is no wonder, that an Emperor, who made the Philoſophy of thoſe Times his Study, the *Sophiſts* his chief Favourites, and Popularity his Aim, ſhould not be converted to a Religion ſo unpopular, and ſo oppoſite, in ſome of its principal Articles, to that which the World called Wiſdom.

It is unconceivable, upon what Principles of Religion or Philoſophy this Emperor could Deifie [f] *Lucius Verus* and *Fauſtina*; but it was impoſſible that he could do this, and be at the ſame time a Chriſtian; that the ſame Man, who Deified notorious Wickedneſs, becauſe it had been cloathed in Purple, and ſhined in Emperial Robes, ſhould believe in the Son of God crucified, is utterly inconſiſtent.

The *Pythagoreans* were a ſuperſtitious Sect, and were apt to aſcribe all to Magick; and, beſides, they had given themſelves up by a blind Obedience to their Maſter's Dictates, and therefore were to regard no Reaſons nor Arguments againſt them. In ſhort, the Philoſophers were all exceedingly prepoſſeſs'd and prejudiced by ſome peculiar Opinions of their own,

[d] Vulcat. in Caſſio. [e] Capitolin. [f] id.

beſides

beſides the general Prejudices which they lay under with the reſt of the World. And all Men of any Learning and Education, ſtudied the Books of the Philoſophers, and were commonly addicted to one Sect or other.

It muſt be confeſs'd, that Vanity and the Praiſe of Men was the chief aim of many of the Philoſophers, as *Tertullian* and others of the Fathers object; and therefore they were very unlikely to become Proſelytes to a Religion, which was looked upon in the World with ſuch diſdain and contempt. Philoſophy in general, if we believe [g] *Quintilian*, was in his time, by moſt, uſed as an Artifice and Diſguiſe to conceal the worſt of Vices under a moroſe Look, and a Habit different from that of other Men. And from ſuch Philoſophers as theſe, we muſt expect, that the Scriptures ſhould be read with no manner of Candor, or good and ſerious Intention. [h] *Juſtin Martyr* ſays, that he found by his Conference with *Creſcens* the *Cynick* Philoſopher, that unleſs he prevaricated he underſtood nothing of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and proffers to the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius*, to prove this in his Preſence, if he would be pleaſed to hear him, and to order him another Conference with that Philoſopher. [i] *Autolycus*, a Man of much Study and Learning, wrote againſt the Chriſtian Religion before he underſtood it. And when [k] *Amelin* cited St. *John*'s Goſpel, and approved his Doctrine, he did it with ſuch Philoſophick Pride and Diſdain, that he would not vouchſafe to name him, or to afford him any better Character than that of *Barbarian*. [l] *Origen* gives Inſtances of the wilful Abuſe of the Scriptures by ſome of his time, who cavilled at half Sentences, with-

[g] Inſtit. lib. i. c. 1. [h] Apol. ad M. Aurel.
[i] Theoph. ad Autolyc. l. i.
[k] Euſeb. Præpar. Evang. l. xi. c. 19. Cyrill. contr. Julian. l. viii, p. 283. Theodoret. Tom. 4. Serm. 3.
[l] Contra Celſ. lib. ii.

out

out taking notice of the Coherence which they have with the reſt. And he complains that [m] *Celſus* ſeem'd never to have read the Scriptures, though he pretended to a very exact Knowledge both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Religion, but underſtood little of either. [n] *Athenagoras*, who before him had read the Scriptures with more Care and Sincerity, though with the ſame Deſign, became converted, and wrote in Defence of that Religion, which he intended to oppoſe. [o] *Hierocles* likewiſe had read the *New Teſtament*, with a deſign to write againſt it, but he who could believe the Miracles of *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and prefer that notorious Impoſtor to our Bleſſed Saviour, and *Maximus Ægienſis*, *Damis* the Philoſopher, and *Philoſtratus*, to St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, ſhews ſo ſtrange a Partiality, as might be expected only in him, who oppoſed the Chriſtian Religion by his Perſecutions more than by his Arguments; for *Hierocles* was the chief Promoter of the Perſecution under *Diocleſian*. *Porphyry* [p] apoſtatiz'd, becauſe ſome Chriſtians at *Caſarea* had beaten him, and then made it his Buſineſs to juſtify his own Practice, and ſeduce others. *Julian*'s [q] Character is, that he had a remarkable Levity in his Temper, was fond of vulgar Applauſe even in the leaſt matters, was too inquiſitive after Preſages, and rather ſuperſtitious, than an exact Obſerver of the Heathen Rites. He had great Familiarity with *Libanius*, *Jamblicus*, and *Maximus Epheſius*, [r] who was put to death for Magick under *Valentinian*. He made it his great Aim to be Chief among the Sophiſts, to [s] whom he wrote in Expreſſions of Fondneſs rather than of Friendſhip or Reſpect, and was of nothing more ambitious than to flatter them, and be flatter'd by them,

[m] Ib. lib. i. [n] Philip. Sidet. apud Dodw. Append. ad Diſſert. in Iren. è Cod. MS. Baroc. [o] Euſeb. contra Hier. & Lactant. Inſtitut. l. v. c. 2, 3. De Mortib. Perſecut. c. xvi. [p] Euſeb. apud Socrat. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 23. [q] Ammian. Marcell. l. xxv. c. 4. [r] Id. l. xxix. c. 1. [s] In Epiſt. ad Libanium, Jamblichum, & Maximum.

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with abundance of Art and Eloquence; and therefore he held every thing dear, that could procure him their Eſteem; and became an implacable Enemy to the Religion he had profeſs'd, tho' he could not deny, in his Writings againſt it, that Miracles had been wrought by Chriſt. Which is a prodigious and deplorable Inſtance, how prejudicial that which paſs'd for Philoſophy in thoſe Ages, was to the Progreſs of the Goſpel.

2. The Gentiles look'd upon the poor perſecuted Condition of the Chriſtians, as an Argument againſt their Religion, and were not only prejudiced againſt a New Religion, which muſt expoſe them to Sufferings, by that Fondneſs which Men naturally have for their own Eaſe and Safety, but [t] when they ſaw the Chriſtians in Diſtreſs, they would upbraid them, as the Pſalmiſt's Enemies reproach'd him, ſaying, *Where is now thy God?* They conſider'd their own Religion as the Religion of their Country, and of their Anceſtors, which was what *Tully* ſaid for it, when he had ruin'd all the Grounds and Pretences in behalf of it. They alledg'd that this had been the Religion of their Forefathers, and that the *Roman* Empire had arrived to ſo much Power and Greatneſs under its Influence. They aſcribed all the Calamities that befel the Empire, by Famine, Earthquakes, or Peſtilence, to the Neglect of their own Worſhip, and the Progreſs of the Chriſtian Religion. This was ſo much inſiſted upon, as is to be ſeen in *Zoſimus*, *Symmachus*, and others, that *Oroſius* ſet himſelf to anſwer it, in a particular Work; and St. *Auſtin*, who put him upon writing it, thought himſelf concern'd in his own Works to oppoſe ſo unreaſonable, but fatal a Prejudice.

3. The Conſequence of theſe Prejudices againſt the Chriſtian Religion, both in Favour to the Religion of their Country, and in Fondneſs for their old Opini-

[t] Aug. Civit. Dei, l. i. c. 29.

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ons, and out of an Abhorrence of Afflictions, and a Diſregard of thoſe, who were ſo much expoſed to them, as having but ſmall pretence to any part of the Divine Care; the Conſequence, I ſay, of theſe Errors and Prejudices, was, that the Gentiles deſpiſed the Chriſtian Religion, before they underſtood any thing of it. For many Men of Learning and Obſervation were ſo little acquainted with it, that they did not diſtinguiſh Chriſtians from Jews, as we ſee by [u] *Suetonius*. They knew not ſo much as the true Pronunciation of the Name of *Chriſt*, or *Chriſtian*, but were wont to write [x] *Chreſtus* and *Chreſtianus*. [y] Many had ſo ſtrange a Prejudice and Abhorrence of Chriſtians, that they would not ſo much as ſpeak to them; ſo far were they from conſidering their Religion impartially. This the *Apologiſts* much inſiſt upon, that they condemn'd and perſecuted what they did not underſtand, the Chriſtians deſir'd no more than a fair Hearing, and if they might but be ſuffer'd to make their Religion fully known to their Adverſaries, they begg'd no farther Favour.

4. It was believed, [z] that the Heathen Oracles had deliver'd, that the Chriſtian Religion ſhould continue no longer than Three hundred and ſixty five Years, and it is obſervable, that *Julian* the Apoſtate died *A. D.* CCCLXV. according to ſome Chronologers, tho' others place his Death Two Years before. It ſeems the Devil had ſome great Expectation from his Reign, but at or near that very time, in which he had foretold that the Chriſtian Religion ſhould have an end, (if the Computation were to be made from the Nativity of Chriſt) he ſaw an end of all his Hopes, in the Death of that Emperor, who was ſo zealous in his

[u] Sueton. in Claudio, c. xxv.

[x] Nam nec Nominis certa eſt notitia penes vos, Tertull. Apol. c. iii. Sueton. ib. Lactant. l. iv. c. 7.

[y] Orig. contra Celſ. l. vi. Epiphan. Hæreſ. Q. xxvii. n. 3.

[z] Aug. de Civit. Dei, l. xviii. c. 53, 54.

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Service, and had given out ſevere Threatnings againſt the Chriſtians of what they were to expect, if he had return'd victorious from that Expedition in which he periſhed. For this Prediction had reſpect probably to his Reign, though the *Greek* Verſes in which it was deliver'd might be alter'd afterwards, or ſo contriv'd at firſt, as to extend it to a longer time, leaving it uncertain from whence the Calculation was to begin. [a] Great Boaſts and Threatnings were undoubtedly then made, that, according to their Prophecies, in a ſhort time, there would not be ſo much as the Name of *Chriſtian* left in the World. However this Oracle kept many of the *Gentiles* from being Chriſtians, till they ſaw the time paſt, which they ſuppoſed to be meant by it, as St. *Auſtin* aſſures us.

5. The Hereſies and Schiſms which ſoon aroſe in the Church, gave great Scandal and Offence to ſuch, as judg'd of theſe things at a diſtance, and in the groſs, without examining into the Occaſions of them. The [b] *Jews* not only blaſphemed *Chriſt* in the Synagogues, but made choice of Men on purpoſe, whom they ſent from *Jeruſalem* into all parts of the World, to vilify him and his Religion. [c] And becauſe Chriſtians ſpoke of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, this was underſtood to their Prejudice, as if they had been for ſetting up a Temporal Kingdom by Rebellion. And the evil Doctrines and Practices of divers Hereticks confirm'd Men in any ill Opinion, which they had conceiv'd of Chriſtians in general. The abſurd Doctrines and Hereſies of the *Gnoſticks* and other Hereticks, were by the Enemies of the Goſpel in their Cenſures and Invectives apply'd to all Chriſtians without diſtinction, and were taken upon Truſt by moſt Men. [d] *Celſus* makes Objections from the erroneous and wicked No-

[a] Greg. Nazianz. Steliteut. ii. p. 99. Edit. Eton.
[b] Juſt. Martyr. Dialog. [c] Id. Apol. 2.
[d] Orig. contra Celſ. lib. 6, 7, 8.

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tions and Practices of the *Ophita*, the *Valentinians*, the *Marcionites*, and others. Under the Denomination of the *Gnoſtick* Hereſy, is comprehended not one particular Sect only, but rather all the moſt pernicious Hereſies in the Primitive Times: and they all, as the Name denotes, made high Pretences to Knowledge; which caus'd them to be ſo much taken notice of, by the Philoſophers, that [e] *Plotinus* and others wrote Books in Confutation of them. No wonder therefore that theſe Hereticks, who made ſo much noiſe in the World, paſs'd with many Men for true Chriſtians, and brought a Scandal upon Religion. This caus'd the Chriſtians in their Apologies to preſs earneſtly for a fair and impartial Hearing of their Cauſe, beſeeching their Enemies, that they would not be ſo injurious to the Truth and to themſelves, as to deſpiſe and condemn what they did not underſtand: They were deſirous to undergo any Trial, if they might but be admitted to be heard. On the other ſide, [f] forged Acts, bearing *Pilate*'s Name, but with a Date which diſcover'd the Fraud, were, by *Maximin*'s Command, diſpers'd over all the Provinces under his Dominion, to be taught Children. And vile Women were at *Damaſcus* threatned with Torments, unleſs they would depoſe, that they were themſelves Chriſtians, and that they knew what had been reported againſt the Chriſtians to be true. And this Confeſſion likewiſe was publiſh'd in all Cities and other Places: And long before, under *Antoninus Verus*, Heathen [g] Servants, who belong'd to Chriſtians, were apprehended in *Gaul*, and forced to depoſe againſt their Maſters, all that could render them and their Religion odious. And the ſame Method of endeavouring to extort Evidence againſt Chriſtians by Tortures, had been practis'd likewiſe in *Trajan*'s Reign, by [h] *Pliny*'s Order, upon ſome

[e] Plotin. περὶς τῶν Γνωστικῶν, Ennead. 2. l. 9. [f] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. i. c. 9. l. ix. c. 57. [g] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. v. c. 1. [h] Plin. l. x. Ep. 97.

Deaco-

Deaconeſſes in *Bithynia*, even after Apoſtates, who worſhipped Idols, and blaſphemed Chriſt, had nevertheleſs vindicated his Religion from the Crimes charged upon it. And tho' the conſtant Aſſeveration of theſe Women under all their Torments, convinced *Pliny* of the Innocency of Chriſtians, yet others were more unreaſonable; and it was long before theſe Prejudices could be overcome in the generality of Men, eſpecially, when Tortures were ſo often uſed to extort falſe Evidence.

6. Yet many, who did not actually become Chriſtians, had more favourable and juſt Thoughts of the Chriſtian Religion. [i] *Alexander Severus* had the Effigies of *Chriſt* in his Chapel, and had deſigned to erect a Temple for the Worſhip of him, and to inſert his Name among the Heathen Gods. As it is reported, that *Adrian* likewiſe, with the ſame intention, had commanded Temples to be built without Images in all Cities, but was diſſuaded by ſome, who conſulted the Oracles about it, which gave out, that all Men would then become Chriſtians, and the other Temples would ſoon be forſaken. This, which is related concerning *Adrian*, has been, by ſome, ſuppoſed to be a miſtake, becauſe the Fathers ſay nothing of it. But *Æl. Lampridius* (or rather *Spartianus*) who mentions it, being a Heathen, might perhaps have it from the *Gentiles*; for it was only in *Adrian*'s intention, to ſet up the Worſhip of *Chriſt*, which might be unknown by the Chriſtians of his time, the deſign being laid aſide upon conſulting the Oracles. It was certainly reported in the Hiſtorian's time, as he declares, and yet this Objection lies as well againſt the Report as againſt the Reality of the thing: For it is ſtrange that a Report of this nature ſhould be mentioned by no Chriſtian Writer, though there had been no truth in it. [k] *Æmilianus*, the Prefect of *Egypt*, asked *Dio-*

[i] Æl. Lamprid. in Alex. Severo. [k] Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. vii. c. 11.

nyſius,

nyſius, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, when he was brought before him, Why, if he, whom the Chriſtians Worſhipped, be God, they could not Worſhip him with the other Gods? Many admired the Doctrine, and were convinced of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, who could not free themſelves from the Prejudices of their Education; they would have been willing to have it taken in among others, but could not bring themſelves to relinquiſh all their old Religions for it. The Calumnies raiſed againſt the Chriſtians, had cauſed the popular *Odium* and Rage againſt them, but they were vindicated by [l] *Pliny* in an Epiſtle to *Trajan*, by *Serenius Granianus*, Proconſul of *Aſia*, in his Epiſtle to *Adrian*, by *Adrian* himſelf in his Reſcript, by *Antoninus Pius* in his Epiſtle to the *Common Council*, or the *Community* of the Eſtates of *Aſia*, though ſome aſcribe this Epiſtle to *M. Antoninus*, (not to mention his Epiſtle to the Senate of *Rome*.) [m] *Trypho*, the *Jew*, likewiſe frees them from the Crimes commonly laid againſt them, and owns the Excellency of their Precepts contained in the Goſpel. And it is obſervable, that thoſe Crimes which had been wont to be objected againſt the Chriſtians by their former Adverſaries, were not mentioned by *Julian*, in Diſcourſes written to oppoſe them; who [n] elſewhere ſpeaks of them in ſuch a manner, and ſo much to their commendation, as ſhews the mighty force of Truth which could extort it from him. But the Fear and Shame of Men hindred divers from embracing the Chriſtian Religion, who had a truer Notion of Things than to approve of their own. [o] *Seneca* expoſed the Heathen Worſhip, and expreſs'd himſelf with bitterneſs againſt the *Jews*; but being able to find nothing to blame in the Chriſtian Religion, nor daring to

[l] Plin. lib. x. Epiſt. 97. Juſt. Mar. Apol. 2. Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. iv. c. 8, 9, 13.
[m] Juſt. Martyr. Dial. [n] Epiſt. 49. & Fragm. Epiſt. p. 305.
[o] Aug. Civit. Dei, lib. vi. c. 11.

commend it for fear of giving Offence to the Heathens, he made no mention of it at all. It is obſerved likewiſe, that *Plutarch*, who, as [p] *Theodoret* takes notice, was not unacquainted with the Goſpel of Chriſt, makes [q] no Reflections upon our Religion. [r] *Victorinus*, a Man of very great Learning, and who, upon that account, had his Statue erected in the *Forum* at *Rome*, often acknowledged himſelf convinced of the Truth of Chriſtianity, before he could be perſuaded openly to profeſs it, for fear of diſpleaſing his Friends that were Gentiles. He pretended, he might be a Chriſtian as well in ſecret; and this, no doubt, might be the caſe of many others, who never made open Profeſſion of it.

Theſe, and ſuch as theſe, were the occaſions of the Unbelief of the *Jews* and *Gentiles:* Though it muſt be confeſſed, that there is nothing more difficult to be accounted for than the Notions and Actions of Men; it is as hard to give an account how [s] *Seneca* and *Plutarch* ſhould allow of the murthering or ſtarving of poor Infants, (as they certainly did) as why they were not Chriſtians. No *Phœnomena* in Nature can be more variable and uncertain in their Cauſes than the Opinions and Practices of Men, which differ according to their Tempers, and Capacities, and Circumſtances; it is ſufficient, if we can find out any probable Solution, and have ſeveral to offer, which might take place according to ſeveral Caſes. But the Writings of ſuch as oppoſed the Chriſtian Religion, were very ſlight and frivolous, containing a Confeſſion for the moſt part of the principal Matters of Fact, upon which our Faith is eſtabliſhed, and raiſing only ſome weak Cavils which never came up to the main Cauſe, or undertook to diſprove the Truth of

[p] Theodoret. Tom. 4. Serm. 2. de Princip.
[q] Ruald. vit. Plut. c 9. [r] Aug. Confeſſ. lib. 8. c. 2.
[s] Senec. de Ira, lib. i. c. 15. Plut. in Lycurg.

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the Miracles and Prophecies upon which it is founded. They could not deny the Miracles, upon which our Religion is eſtabliſhed, and then let any Man judge what Reaſons they could have for their Infidelity. And, indeed, the prevailing of the Chriſtian Religion under all manner of Diſadvantages as to Humane Means, ſhewed, that the Adverſaries of it had little to ſay againſt it: For they muſt be but poor Arguments, which could not diſſuade Men from becoming Chriſtians, when they muſt incur all the Dangers and Sufferings of this World to be ſo.

The Books of the firſt Heathen Writers againſt the Chriſtian Religion, are frequently cited by St. *Jerom*, and St. *Auſtin*, and other Authors of their time, as commonly known, and probably they were extant long after. So that their Arguments were baffled and deſtroyed long before the Books themſelves, and they had time and opportunity enough to do all the miſchief that they were capable of. And their Writings are not yet ſo far loſt, but that we ſtill know their principal Arguments, which the Chriſtian Writers have not concealed, but have given them their full Force, and commonly in their own Words. *Origen* was ſo careful to omit nothing conſiderable which *Celſus* had alledged, that he was often forced to make Apologies for mentioning the ſame things over again, rather than he would ſeem to let any thing paſs, which was material, that his Adverſary had ſaid, without taking notice of it. And ſome [r] Pieces are preſerved entire, as the Petition of *Symmachus* among the Epiſtles of St. *Ambroſe*, and the Epiſtle of *Maximus Madaurenſis* among thoſe of St. *Auſtin*. The Arguments of *Julian* are ſet down at large by St. *Cyril*; and that Apoſtate was ſo great an Advocate and Patron of Heathenism, that the Enemies of Chriſtianity

[r] Ambr. lib. ii. Epiſt. 11. Aug. Epiſt. 43.

had [u] a certain *Æra* for the computation of Years from his Reign, and ſeem to have proceeded upon the Artifices and Methods which he had ſettled: Yet we learn from [x] St. *Chryſoſtom*, that the Books of the Philoſophers againſt the Chriſtian Religion, were neglected and deſpiſed by the Gentiles themſelves, and were ſcarce to be found but among the Chriſtians, before the Edict of *Theodoſius junior*, to prohibit them.

There was a long Succeſſion of Philoſophers and Sophiſts, who made it their buſineſs to oppoſe the Chriſtian Religion. The School of *Platoniſts*, which continued at *Athens* for ſome Ages, would revive, or reinforce any Arguments that had been uſed by their Predeceſſors in oppoſition to Chriſtianity. *Proclus* and *Damaſcius*, who were of this School, lived about the middle of the Sixth Age; [y] *Proclus* ſpent five whole Years in collecting the Notions of the former Philoſophers, and in abridging the *Chaldaick* Doctrines from the Writings of the *Chaldeans*; and the beſt Commentaries upon the Oracles, written at large by *Porphyry* and *Jamblichus*: So that no Care or Labour was omitted by theſe Learned and Zealous Men, to recommend their own Religion to the World in oppoſition to the Chriſtian. What [z] *Proclus* had to ſay againſt it, may yet be ſeen. The Writings of *Damaſcius* were extant [a] in *Photius*'s time, in the middle of the Ninth Age; the Hiſtory of *Eunapius* was then likewiſe extant, and is [b] ſaid to be preſerved at *Venice*; We have the Abridgment of it by *Zoſimus*, and a ſufficient Specimen of his malicious Invectives in his

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[u] Ἐτιμήθησε ὑπ (Proclus) τῶν δ' ἀπ' κ' ἀπ' ρ' ἀπὸ τ ἰουλιανῦ βασιλείας. Marin. vit. Procl. c. 36.

[x] Παννυχεὶς βάβυλλοσ. β. Vid. Spanhem. in Julian. oper. Præfat.

[y] Marin. Vit. Procl. c. 26. [z] Vid. Fabric. de Procli Scriptis.

[a] Phot. Cod. CLXXXI. CCXLII. LXXVII.

[b] Voſſ. de Græc. Hiſt.

other

other Writings. And it is probable, that theſe, and many other Books of the like nature, which are now loſt, continued much longer than any Accounts, which we have now remaining of them mention. Of about Thirty Anſwers [c] which were written to *Porphyry*, by ſeveral Authors, not one of them is now to be found. When the World was ſatisfy'd of the Inſufficiency of his Objections, the Anſwers to his Books were as little regarded as the Books themſelves, but underwent the ſame Fate with them. [d] The Doctrines of the *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks* (he ſpeaks of ſuch as were peculiar to either Sect) were little regarded in St. *Auſtin*'s time; and none durſt maintain them, but under the Denomination of ſome Hereſy or other; theſe Two Sects then were in ſo little Eſteem, that they had not Authority enough to give thoſe Errors any Countenance, which they before had ſo long with great Subtilty and Succeſs defended againſt the *Platoniſts*; but they who would gain any Reception to their Errors were at laſt forced to aſſume the Name of Chriſtians, and betake themſelves to ſome *Hereſy*. Of *Plotinus*'s School, ſome became Chriſtians, and others apply'd themſelves to Magick; as *Plotinus* himſelf muſt have done, if we believe all that *Porphyry* writes of him. The Relation of the Serpent, which was ſeen under the Bed, and then was obſerv'd creeping into a hole of the Wall, as he gave up the Ghoſt, is an odd Story. [e] *Proclus* ſuffer'd himſelf to be adored, and a Serpent was likewiſe ſeen about his Head, in his laſt Sickneſs: This was the Effect of the *Theurgicks*, which theſe Philoſophers profeſs'd, and of *Magick*, which [f] *Porphyry*, upon the Authority of Oracles, ſtyles the Gift of the Gods. The Arguments of *Proclus* againſt the Chriſtian Religion were chiefly to

[c] Holſtein. de Vit. & Script. Porphyr. c. x.
[d] Aug. Epiſt. 56. [e] Marin. Vit. Procl. c. 25, 30.
[f] Apud Euſeb. Præp. Evang. l. vi. c. 4.

prove the Eternity of the World: and have been ſo little regarded, that they were ſuppoſed to have been loſt, till a [8] Critick lately took notice, that they are ſtill extant in the Anſwer to them by *Johannes Philopomus*.

The *Jews*, who from the beginning of Chriſtianity, but eſpecially ſince the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, have in vaſt numbers been ſpread all over the World, and have ever been the moſt implacable Enemies of the Goſpel, had the greateſt Opportunity to detect any Falſhood in it, and have never omitted any Advantage of improving and enforcing the Arguments againſt it; and therefore would be ſure to retain any thing conſiderable, which had been objected by their Forefathers, or by the Heathens, with whom they convers'd. The *Jews* have been a perpetual reſtleſs Enemy in all Parts and Ages of the World, and nothing material in this Caſe, would eſcape their Obſervation. But out of the Writings of the ancient *Jews*, which are ſtill extant, many things have been alledg'd by many Learned Men, of our own and other Nations, in Confirmation of our Religion, from the Confeſſion of the *Jews* themſelves.

The Unbelief therefore both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* of thoſe Ages, is no material Objection; nor altogether ſo unaccountable as the Unbelief of too many now, who were born among Chriſtians, and have had their Education in the Chriſtian Religion. The Truth is, Example is always the weakeſt Argument in any Caſe, and can be of no Force or Authority againſt the cleareſt rational Evidence. But the Propagation of the Goſpel is it ſelf an unanſwerable Argument in proof of it. *The World hated it, becauſe it was not of this World.* For which Reaſon it was long before *the Kingdoms of this World were become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt*, (Rev. xi. 15.) And it ap-

[8] Fabric. de Procli Scriptis, p. 80.

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pears by the Laws and Hiſtories of the firſt Ages, after the Emperors were Chriſtians, that the Goſpel ſtill prevail'd by its own Evidence and Worth, rather than by any other Power or Authority. The Jews were uſed with all manner of Indulgence; they enjoy'd great [h] Privileges, they had their [i] Patriarchs for near CCCCXXIX. Years after Chriſt, and liv'd unmoleſted in their Worſhip, till [k] they had polluted it with Chriſtian Blood, and their Deriſion and Profanation of the Croſs of Chriſt had call'd for the Severity of the Laws. The Chriſtian Emperors were ſo far from uſing Force to cauſe Men to profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, that [l] *Theodoſius the Great* was the firſt who made it Criminal to apoſtatize to Heatheniſm. And during the Reigns of [m] *Jovian*, *Valentinian*, *Valens*, and *Gratian*, there were no Laws enacted againſt Heathens or Heathen-Worſhip. And indeed there needed none. For about the Beginning of the Reign of *Valentinian* and *Valens*, *A. D.* CCCLXV. the Heathens were ſo few, and withal ſo mean generally, and inconſiderable, that they then began to be called [n] *Pagans*, and the Barbarous Nations bordering upon the Empire, to be ſtyled *Gentiles*. And in the time of [o] *Theodoſius*, there were ſcarce any Pagans to be found. If therefore the Oppoſition made by the Jews and Heathens be an Objection to Chriſtianity; this is certainly a Confirmation of the Truth of it, that all their Prejudice and Obſtinacy was in ſo few Ages ſo generally overcome, by no other Force, but that of its Divine Truth and Excellency.

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[h] Theodoſ. cod. xvi. Tit. 7. l. 3, 4.
[i] Ib. l. 8. Jovian. 11. & Gothofred. ad l. 22.
[k] Id. ib. ad l. 18. & Socrat. l. vii. c. 16.
[l] Theodoſ. cod. xvi. Tit. 7. l. 1.
[m] Gothofred ad Tit. 10. l. 7.
[n] Id. in Tit. 10.
[o] Ib. l. 22.

CHAP. XXXIII.

That the Confidence of Men of Falſe Religions, and their Willingneſs to ſuffer for them, is no Prejudice to the Authority of the True Religion.

THE Chriſtian Religion doth infinitely ſurpaſs all others in the Number of its Martyrs of both Sexes, of every Age and Nation, and Rank and Condition. Miſtaken ignorant Zealots may often have ſuffer'd for other Religions, but Men of the higheſt Station and Worth, and inferiour to none in the Knowledge and Experience of every thing that the World eſteems Excellent, have renounc'd all, and upon Choice, and after a full Conſideration of the Merits of the Cauſe, have laid down their Lives for the ſake of the Goſpel. Tyrants of the greateſt Power and Cruelty have made it their Aim and Ambition, by all ſorts of Tortures, to extirpate the Chriſtian Religion; they eſteem'd their Perſecutions matter of Triumph, and a fit Subject for the [a] Inſcriptions of Monuments erected to their Memories. And a [b] Collection was made by *Ulpian* of their Reſcripts againſt the Chriſtians, that they might be tranſmitted to Poſterity. But the invincible Patience and glorious Sufferings of the Chriſtians prevail'd againſt all the Rage and Force of their Enemies. If the Martyrologies of all Religions were to be compar'd, there would ſoon appear ſo manifeſt a Difference between the Chriſtian Martyrs, and the Sufferers for other Religions, that nothing would be needful to be ſaid upon this Subject. But remembring with whom I have to deal, I am reſolv'd to take every thing at the loweſt, and argue with them upon their own Terms. Let us for a

[a] Gruter. Inſcript. p. 238 280. [b] Lactant. l. v. c. 11.

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while ſet aſide whatever of this nature might be ſaid in preference of the Chriſtian Martyrs, and ſuppoſe the Numbers and Zeal of the Martyrs (for ſo we muſt call them at preſent) of other Religions, to have been as great as can be imagin'd, yet the Cauſe it ſelf makes a plain Difference between them.

An ignorant Zeal in a wrong Cauſe is no Argument againſt the Goodneſs of any Cauſe, which is maintain'd and promoted by ſuch a Zeal as is reaſonable, and proceeds upon ſure Grounds. Indeed, it were very hard and very ſtrange, if that which is true, ſhould be ever the leſs certain, or the leſs to be regarded and eſteem'd, becauſe there may be other things that are falſe, of which ſome Men are as firmly perſuaded, and are as much concern'd for them, as any one can be for the Truth it ſelf. And yet this is the wiſeſt thing that many have to pretend againſt the Certainty of the Religion, in which they were baptized, that there are many Impoſtures in the World, and none is without its Zealots to appear in Vindication of it. I am confident no Man ever parted with any thing, but his Religion, upon ſo weak a Pretence.

A falſe Religion is not the only thing for which Men are wont to have an undeſerv'd Value; but their Country, their Friends, and themſelves they are commonly as much miſtaken in, and do as highly overprize: Is there then no real Difference, or ſolid worth in any of theſe? Some of the moſt unlikely Countries in the World have been admir'd by the Natives, as if they were the Garden of *Eden*, and the place of *Paradiſe*: Though there is nothing eaſier, than to make a Diſtinction concerning different Countries. And it is as eaſy to diſtinguiſh between the *Elyſium* of the Heathens, or *Mahomet*'s *Paradiſe*, and the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and between the Ways which lead to them. There is nothing, eſpecially if it be of any Moment and Conſequence to them, for which Men have

have not ſhewn themſelves paſſionately concern'd; and it is not to be expected that they ſhould be ſo much more infallible in Religion than in other things, or ſhould be ſo much leſs in earneſt about it, as not to diſcover the ſame Frailties, and the ſame Affections, which are viſible in all the other Actions and Buſineſs of their Lives.

It is often ſeen in moſt Caſes, that ſome are as earneſt and zealous in a falſe Cauſe, as others are in a True; but doth this prove that there is no Difference between Falſhood and Truth? When two Men of oppoſite Parties are equally confident of the Goodneſs of their Cauſe, it is certain that but one of them can be in the right; and it is as certain, that one of them muſt be, at leaſt, ſo far in the right, as he contradicts the other; becauſe, as the two parts of a Contradiction cannot be both True, ſo they cannot be both Falſe. If then a confident and zealous Perſuaſion doth not determine Right and Wrong, True and Falſe, the remaining Difficulty is, how to diſtinguiſh them, and that muſt be by the proper Evidence, and the intrinſick Goodneſs of the Cauſe.

And our Evidence in behalf of our Religion, is plain matter of Fact; as the Death, and Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Saviour, and the Miracles wrought by him and his Apoſtles. And if our Religion has ſufficient Proof of what we aſſert in matter of Fact, and other Religions have not ſufficient Proof of that Authority to which they lay claim, this muſt determine the Point, though a *Mahometan* or *Pagan* ſhould be as zealous for his Religion, as a *Chriſtian* can be. It is commonly and truly ſaid, that it is not the Suffering, but the Cauſe, which makes the Martyr; and if Men of Falſe Religions have never ſo much Confidence of the Truth of them, and have no Ground for it, this can be no Argument againſt the Grounds and Proofs upon which the Evidence of the Chriſtian Religion depends. Other Religions may

may have their Zealots, who offer themſelves to die for them, but the Chriſtian Religion properly has the only Martyrs. For Martyrs are *Witneſſes*, and no other Religion is capable of being atteſted in ſuch a manner as the Chriſtian Religion; no other Religion was ever propagated by Witneſſes, who had ſeen and heard, and been every way converſant in what they witneſs'd concerning the Principles of their Religion; no Religion beſides was ever preach'd by Men, who, after an unalterable Conſtancy under all kinds of Sufferings, at laſt died for aſſerting it, when they muſt of neceſſity have known, whether it were true or falſe, and therefore certainly knew it to be true, or elſe they would never have ſuffer'd and died in that manner for it; no other Religion was ever atteſted from its firſt Propagation for ſeveral Hundreds of Years together, by Men who had either ſeen the firſt Preachers themſelves, or had been acquainted with others who had ſeen them, or had wrought Miracles, and ſeen others work them; no other Religion is contain'd in Books, which were written at the firſt Propagation of it, and diſpers'd into all Countries, in all Languages, amongſt all ſorts of Men, and eſpecially amongſt thoſe who were moſt concern'd, and moſt able and deſirous to diſprove it, if it had been falſe; no Religion beſides has by ſo weak and unlikely means prevail'd over all the Power and Policy of the World; none is in its Doctrine ſo agreeable to Reaſon, and ſo worthy of God for its Author; and none has been deliver'd down with ſo clear a continued and uninterrupted Teſtimony through all Ages, and convey'd by a Succeſſion of Teſtimonies to this preſent Age: And therefore no other Religion can have Martyrs, who can die in confirmation of ſuch a Teſtimony as this, or who can be Martyrs and Witneſſes to it by aſſuring the World at their Death, that they have receiv'd the Religion thus teſtify'd and confirm'd, for which they die.

It is not the bare aſſerting a thing boldly, and then lying for it, which makes a Martyr, but the Qualifications neceſſary in a Witneſs are neceſſary in him, that is, that he ſhould have all Opportunities needful to know the Truth, as well as no Temptation to ſpeak the contrary. Which Qualifications were evident in the Apoſtles and firſt Martyrs, whoſe Teſtimony is that upon which the Proof of our Religion is founded, and the Martyrdoms of latter Ages are additional Teſtimonies, which without the former would be inſignificant, but ſuppoſing them, are all the Teſtimony that can be given to any matter of Fact at this diſtance of Time, and are as much beyond the Sufferings in behalf of any other Religion, as the Evidence of the Chriſtian Religion is beyond the Evidence for all others.

It is not merely Zeal, though it proceed even to Death and Martyrdom, upon which we build our Faith, but the Reaſons which Chriſtians have for their Zeal. Divers Nations have been as earneſt Aſſertors of their fabulous Antiquities, as others can be of theirs, which are known to be true; but are theſe ever the leſs, or thoſe ever the more true upon that account? We inſiſt upon it, that we have Books to ſhew, and clear Evidence to produce for what we maintain, and theſe have been examin'd by many Men in every Age, and compar'd with what is to be alledg'd in behalf of contrary Religions, and Men of the greateſt Learning, and Judgment, and Prudence, have choſen to die rather than to renounce this Religion for any other, after the niceſt and moſt impartial Examination they could make. Whereas the Zealots and Martyrs for the Religions which are contrary to Chriſtianity, muſt be acknowledg'd to be Men that underſtand nothing of Antiquity, but are ignorant of the Hiſtory of their ſeveral Religions, and take all upon uncertain Report, and abſurd Traditions, without any Proof or Poſſibility of it, and even againſt manifeſt

manifeſt Reaſon, and the Evidence of undoubted Hiſtory.

So plain is it, that the Zeal and Confidence of Men of falſe Religions, and their willingneſs to die for them, can be no prejudice to the Authority and Certainty of the true Religion. The Enthuſiaſms and vain Notions and Conceits of ſome Zealots, can be no more a Prejudice to the Truth and Reality of our Religion, than it is an Argument againſt the Truth and Certainty of Humane Reaſon, that there are ſo many Fools and Madmen in the World.

CHAP. XXXIV.

That Differences in Matters of Religion, are no Prejudice to the Truth and Authority of it.

THere is nothing which has proved a greater Snare and Scandal to weak Minds, nor which gives the Enemies of Religion greater Advantage, as they think, againſt it, than the Diſſentions amongſt Chriſtians, and the different Sects and Parties into which they are divided. This makes ſome willing to conclude, that there is no certainty on any ſide, when they ſee equal Zeal and equal Confidence in Men of all Perſuaſions, that contend for their ſeveral Opinions.

But St. *Paul* writes to the *Corinthians*, that there muſt be not only Diviſions, but Hereſies alſo, and not only that they muſt be, but that they are not without their uſe and expediency in the Church; they are ſo far from being any real Prejudice to the Truth and Certainty of Religion, that they do indeed conduce to manifeſt the Excellency of it, and the Sincerity of thoſe that profeſs it. *For there muſt be alſo Hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you*, 1 Cor. xi. 19. From whence

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I ſhall ſhew, I. That Differences in Matters of Religion muſt be among Chriſtians, unleſs God ſhould miraculouſly and irreſiſtibly interpoſe to prevent them. II. That it is not neceſſary, nor expedient, that God ſhould thus interpoſe. III. That theſe Differences, how great and how many ſoever they be, even the worſt of Schiſms and Hereſies, are no prejudice to the Truth and Authority of Religion.

I. That Differences in Matters of Religion muſt be among Chriſtians, unleſs God ſhould miraculouſly and irreſiſtibly interpoſe to prevent them. *There muſt be alſo Hereſies among you:* The miraculous Power and Demonſtration of an infallible Spirit in the Apoſtles themſelves, could not hinder the riſe of them. *It muſt needs be,* ſays our Saviour, *that Offences come,* or *it is impoſſible but that Offences will come; but wo unto him through whom they come,* Matth. xviii. 7. Luke xvii.

The Church can by no means be free from Offences, Scandals and Diviſions, unleſs God ſhould forcibly reſtrain Men from running into them.

The Tempers and Capacities of Men are very different, and therefore in many caſes they will make a different Judgment of Things. Much Attention and Thoughtfulneſs, and an exact Knowledge of Antiquity, is requiſite to make a true Judgment in divers Controverſies, and few Men are willing to be at that pains, which is neceſſary to inform themſelves aright in leſſer Difficulties; they are contented to take up with the Appearances of Things, which firſt offer themſelves, or to which, by Cuſtom and Education, they have been moſt uſed: There is ſo much Difficulty to get rid of Prejudices, ſo much Labour and Study is in many caſes required in the ſearch after Truth, that few can prevail with themſelves to undergo it. Few Men examine the Ground of Things, and fewer do it to any Purpoſe; moſt Men follow, as they are led, without any farther Care, or Thought, and

and die in the Religion in which they were brought up, without much troubling themſelves whether it be true or falſe, but taking all upon Truſt: if they happen to be in the right, it is by chance, and more than they know, or are able to prove; if they be in the wrong, they know as little of it, but right, or wrong, they follow the Example of others, of whom they have conceived a favourable Opinion, or who have ſome Authority with them to influence them; they profeſs their Religion, as they practiſe other things, for no better Reaſon, than becauſe they ſee others have done it before them, and they ſtand up for it only, as they do for all Cuſtoms, which, by long uſe, are become familiar, and almoſt natural to them, but may be worn out by a different Practice and Cuſtom.

And when the generality of Men are thus careleſs and unconcerned to examine the Grounds and Principles of their ſeveral Religions, this gives a mighty Opportunity and Advantage to Men of ill Principles, and ill Deſigns, to infuſe and ſpread their Opinions. For if by the Plauſibleneſs and Importunity of their Inſinuations, or by the Profeſſion of a more than ordinary Zeal and Strictneſs in ſome things that are moſt popular, they can but gain a few Perſons of Note and Intereſt, who may influence others, a Party is made, and a Sect ſet up, which may perhaps continue for ſome Generations; and a fondneſs for Novelty, a Perſonal Diſlike and Prejudice againſt ſome Men, and an Eſteem and Admiration of others, and ſeveral Accidents, as they fall in with the ſeveral Tempers and Inclinations of Men, may make great Additions to a Sect that is once formed. Men, who thought themſelves diſobliged amongſt the *Jews*, were wont to go over to the *Samaritans*; and Deſerters in Religion are as uſual as in War, upon any great Diſcontent, or upon hopes of great Advantage. And theſe Men, to teſtifie their Sincerity, are obſerved commonly to

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be moſt Violent; however, they ſerve to make a Number, and to ſtrengthen a Party.

Moſt Schiſms and Hereſies have been begun by Men of ill Deſigns, who under pretences of Godlineſs, gratified their own Paſſions of Ambition, or Covetouſneſs, or more ſcandalous Vices. This was the Original of the Hereſies in the Apoſtles days, and it has been obſervable in the firſt Authors of them, ever ſince. An Affectation of Singularity, of Popular Fame, and Preeminence, have been the occaſion of great Miſchiefs in the Church. Some Men are as fond of their own New Opinions, as others are of Honours, or Wealth, or Pleaſure; and can bear no Contradiction, but contend for a kind of Empire in Knowledge, and ſhew a mighty Zeal to gain Proſelytes, becauſe this is to extend their Conqueſts, and enlarge their Dominion over Mens Faith. Some that *devoured Widows Houſes*, have *for a pretence made long Prayers*, Matth. xxiii. 14. *And it is a ſhame, and horror, even to ſpeak of thoſe things*, which have been done by others; not only *in ſecret*, but openly, and in the view of the World, under the moſt ſolemn and zealous Profeſſions for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls. And the Errors of Men of no ill meaning, but of great Zeal, with little Knowledge, have ſometimes found a ſtrange Acceptance in the World, for the ſake of that Integrity and Sincerity, which appeared in their firſt Authors.

Now when all the Paſſions, and Infirmities, and Vices of Men, thus contribute to produce and promote Differences in Religion, it is no greater wonder that there are ſuch Differences, than that there are Frailties and Vices amongſt Men; that ſome Men are vicious, and ready to ſeduce others, and that others are eaſie to be ſeduced.

St. *Paul* complains of *falſe Apoſtles, deceitful Workers, transforming themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt*; *and no marvel*, ſays he, *for Satan himſelf is transformed in-*

to an Angel of Light; therefore it is no great thing, if his Miniſters alſo be transformed, as the Miniſters of Righteouſneſs, whoſe end ſhall be according to their Works, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15. Satan himſelf ſtrives to appear like an Angel of Light, and Sin is forced to take the diſguiſe of Religion. Vice is a thing, which few Men care much to own, how fond ſoever they be of it: Numbers in other caſes are wont to bring things into Reputation, but it is not ſo in moſt Vices, which tho' they have been practiſed by great Numbers of Men in all Ages, yet have been always nevertheleſs infamous; and this ſhews the deteſtable Nature of Vice and Irreligion, that they could never become creditable in a vicious and irreligious World; but bad Men are aſhamed of them, and endeavour to conceal and hide them under ſome colour of Religion and Vertue.

But ſince every Vice, and every Paſſion, and Intereſt of Men, may conduce to the raiſing and fomenting of Differences in Religion, it is as impoſſible that they ſhould not be in the World, as that Sin it ſelf ſhould not be in it, which can never be wholly prevented, unleſs God ſhould force Men to be Good; and therefore it is impoſſible, that there ſhould be no Differences in Religion, unleſs the ſame Force and Neceſſity ſhould reſtrain Men from them.

II. It is not neceſſary, nor expedient, that God ſhould miraculouſly and irreſiſtibly interpoſe to prevent Differences in Matters of Religion; becauſe it would contradict the very Deſign of all Religion, for God thus to interpoſe: The Deſign of Religion is to Direct and Command Men, what to Believe, and what to Do, upon ſuch Terms as may prevail with them by reaſonable Arguments; by Exhortations and Encouragements on the one hand, and Admonitions and Threatnings on the other. But to force Men to be of one Mind, and one Profeſſion, would be to lay aſide theſe Terms, and to render the Motives

and Arguments which Religion proposeth useless, and to have no regard to the Rewards and Punishments by which it is enjoined. There can be no more Reason, that God should constrain Men to have right Notions of Religion, than that he should force them to obey those Notions, and put them in practice; or that he should restrain Men from Heresies and Schisms; that is, from such Sins as more directly and immediately concern Religion, rather than from any other Sins: But there is great reason why it should not be so, because this would make Religion it self useless and insignificant, by taking away the Grounds and Foundations of all Religion, and by destroying the Liberty of Mankind, which is necessary in all Acts of Religion. For, he that Acts by Necessity, cannot Act by the Principles of Religion, which advises and commands Men to *refuse the Evil, and chuse the Good*. Differences in Religion could not be prevented without over-ruling all the Passions, and hindering all the Vices of Men, and without frustrating the Commands and Precepts, and contradicting the Design and Institution of Religion; and it is not to be expected, that rather than suffer Differences in Religion, God should so check and restrain Men, as not to leave them at Liberty to Act upon the Principles of Religion, but upon mere Force and Necessity. If Men be permitted to Err and to Sin, they will Err and Sin in Matters relating to Religion, as well as in others, and to debar Men unavoidably from Sin and Error, would be to proceed in such a manner as is inconsistent with the Motives and Arguments both of Reason and Religion, and to offer Violence, not only to Humane Nature, but to the Wisdom and Counsel of God, in his Dispensations for the Salvation of Mankind.

It is the Wisdom of God not to force Men upon doing Good, but to bring Good out of Evil; and if Men will resolve to commit Sin, and will not be pre-

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vailed upon by all that God has ſaid and done, to withdraw them from it; then to make their worſt Actions inſtrumental to his own Glory, and to the Salvation of other Men. And there is this good effect from the moſt pernicious Hereſies and Schiſms, *That thoſe which are approved, may be made manifeſt* by them; that the Sincerity of the good Chriſtian may appear, and that the Diſguiſe may be taken off from Hypocrites, that they may be no longer able to ſeduce Men by a ſhew of Godlineſs. It is a juſt Judgment of God upon unrepenting Sinners, to *let them fall from one Wickedneſs to another, and not come into his Righteouſneſs*; to puniſh ſecret Sins, by ſuffering Men to run into publick and notorious Crimes, whereby they diſcover and expoſe themſelves to the World. Thus it was in the caſe of thoſe Hereticks of whom St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *They profeſs'd that they knew God, but in Works they denied him, being abominable and diſobedient, and to every good Work reprobate*, Tit. i. 16. And giving a full and lamentable Deſcription of this ſort of Men, in concluſion he ſays, *But they ſhall proceed no farther; for their Folly ſhall be manifeſt to all Men*, 2 Tim. iii. 9. They were permitted to come to ſuch horrid and frightful degrees of Wickedneſs and Blaſphemy, as that all Men, who meant well, would be ſure to avoid them, and to depart from them; and of thoſe who joined themſelves with ſuch Men, and went over to them, St. *John* declares, *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us*, 1 John ii. 19.

And when theſe, and ſuch like Hereſies break looſe, and diſturb the Peace of the Church, this makes all ſincere Chriſtians more careful and diligent to *hold faſt the form of ſound Words, and earneſtly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints.* Men are apt to be too careleſs and uncon-

cerned about Religion, when they meet with no Oppoſition: But when the Faith is denied, and the Terms of Salvation are diſputed againſt, this will ſtir up and actuate a mighty Zeal in all, who have any regard for the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Men. From whence it comes to paſs, that moſt Hereſies have been of no long continuance, but appear and ſhew themſelves, are diſproved, become odious, and after a while are hardly known, but from the Books of ſuch as confuted them; and thoſe Points of Doctrine which were contradicted, become ſo much the better eſtabliſhed, and the more firmly believed for the future. Hereſies are but the Tryals of Religion, as Dangers are of Courage; it tends to the Honour and Evidence of Truth, to be exerciſed and encompaſſed with Errors, which fall before it, and are able to do it no hurt.

So that Differences in Religion are ſuffered by Almighty God, as all other Sins are, becauſe it is the deſign of Religion, not to compel Men, but to perſuade and exhort them, and to permit them to be guilty of all manner of Sin, whilſt it offers the moſt prevailing Arguments and Motives againſt it; and to be guilty of Schiſms and Hereſies amongſt the reſt: And theſe are Temptations and Tryals to good Men, and often ſerve as Judgments upon the wicked, to puniſh one Wickedneſs with another, and expoſe them to the World for Hypocrites and Impoſtors. And they ſerve to confirm the Articles of our Faith, which hereby become the more throughly examined, and the more fully explained. And theſe are ſufficient Reaſons, why God ſhould not, by his Almighty Power, hinder thoſe Differences in Religion, which muſt of neceſſity happen by the Sins and Folly of Men, unleſs he ſhould miraculouſly and irreſiſtibly interpoſe to prevent them.

III. Theſe Differences, how great and how many ſoever they may be, even the worſt of Schiſms and Hereſies,

Hereſies, are no Prejudice to the Truth and Certainty of Religion. Religion is our Direction, our Way to Heaven and Happineſs; but will any Man ſay, that becauſe there are many wrong Ways, therefore there is none right? This is beneath the Diſcretion of every ordinary Traveller, who, if the Way be difficult, reſolves to uſe the more Care and Diligence in finding it out, but never concludes with himſelf that there is no ſuch Way, and no ſuch Place as that to which he intends to go. For a Man to argue from the Multitude of Hereſies and Schiſms againſt the Truth of Religion, is as if he would prove, that becauſe there are ſo many *Curve* Lines, therefore there can be none *Right*; when for this very Reaſon we muſt conclude, that there is ſuch a thing as Streightneſs, or elſe there could be nothing Crooked; for we can have no Notion of one without the other. And as all Obliquity ſuppoſes Rectitude, from which it declines, ſo Vice ſuppoſes Virtue, and Error ſuppoſes Truth, and Error in Religion muſt ſuppoſe Truth in Religion. For whatever is contrary to any thing, neceſſarily implies the Being of that to which it is contrary; and that which is not, can have nothing contrary to it. Nothing is more certain than it is, that if there were no Virtue, there could be no Vice; if no Truth, there could be no Error, and unleſs there were Truth and Excellency in Religion, it were impoſſible that there ſhould be any ſuch thing as Hereſy or Schiſm, which are other Words for Error and Vice in matters of Religion. And it hath been already obſerv'd, that the worſt Hereſies give an occaſion to the clearing thoſe Points of Religion which are diſputed againſt, and ſo muſt be far from invalidating the Truth of it.

But becauſe theſe are things which ſome will not underſtand, or may be unwilling to acknowledge; and it is generally look'd upon as a ſure Argument of the Weakneſs of any Cauſe, when thoſe that maintain it are not agreed about it amongſt themſelves; let us

conſider, 1. That all Parties are agreed in the Truth of Religion in general, and of the Chriſtian Religion in particular: 2. That there is nothing beſides, in which Men have not diſagreed, as well as in matters of Religion.

1. All Parties are agreed in the Truth of Religion in general. Even Hypocrites and Impoſtors ſo far own Religion, as to believe that it is worth the counterfeiting. For no Man counterfeits that which is not, no, nor that which has no Worth nor Excellency in it. No Man will be at much pains to be thought an Atheiſt, or an Infidel, who is not ſuch; and no Man will endeavour to be thought vicious, unleſs he be ſo indeed. There are few Pretenders to the Shame and Infamy which in all Ages have been inſeparable from Irreligion; but it is the natural Senſe which Men have of Religion, that gives it ſo great Credit and Honour in a wicked World, that even the Shadow and Counterfeit of it has ſometimes too much prevail'd.

But farther, all Sects and Parties of Chriſtians are agreed in the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and the only Difference amongſt them is concerning particular Doctrines and Opinions, that is, concerning the true Meaning and Explication of it: And no Man diſputes about the Meaning of that which he does not at the ſame time ſuppoſe to be. When any Point or Clauſe of a Law is in Diſpute, it would be ridiculous from thence to conclude, that no ſuch Law was ever made; becauſe all Parties muſt agree that there is ſuch a Law, or elſe there could be no Diſpute about it. And when Differences ariſe in Religion, it is an Argument for the Truth of Religion, becauſe there can be Difference about nothing, and Men would never differ about Religinn, if it were not true, or they did not think it to be ſo.

But Chriſtians are not only agreed in the main that the Goſpel is true, but they are likewiſe agreed in the Senſe and Meaning of it, as to the Fundamental Articles

cles necessary to Salvation. This was the ancient Rule and Measure laid down by *Vincentius Lirinensis*, of the Catholick Doctrine necessary to be believ'd, that it had been believ'd in all Ages, in all Places, and in all Churches. And the Excellent Archbishop *Usher*, whose Judgment in the Case may safely be rely'd upon, has [a] declar'd, That *if at this day we should take a Survey of the several* [b] *Professions of Christianity, that have any large Spread in any part of the World (as of the Religion of the* Roman *and the* Reform'd *Churches in our Quarters, of the* Ægyptians *and* Æthiopians *in the South, of the* Grecians *and other Christians in the Eastern Parts) and should put by the Points wherein they differ from one another, and gather into one Body the rest of the Articles, wherein they all did generally agree; we should find, that in those Propositions, which without all Controversie are so universally receiv'd in the whole Christian World, so much Truth is contain'd, as being join'd with holy Obedience, may be sufficient to bring a Man unto everlasting Salvation. Neither have we cause to doubt but that as many as do walk according to this Rule, (neither overthrowing that which they have built, by superinducing any damnable Heresies thereupon, nor otherwise vitiating their Holy Faith with a lewd and wicked conversation) Peace shall be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God.* And he afterwards says, in relation to the Papists in *Ireland*, that he had *sometimes treated with those of the Opposite Party, and mov'd them, that howsoever in other things we did differ one from another, yet we should join together in teaching those main Points, the knowledge whereof was so necessary unto Salvation, and of the Truth whereof there was no Controversy betwixt us.*

[a] *Brief Declaration of the Universality of the Church of Christ, and the Unity of the Catholick Faith professed therein, delivered in a Sermon before the King, the 20th of* June, 1624.

[b] *This Passage was produced by* Dr. Potter, *and defended by Mr.* Chillingworth, *Chap.* iv. §. 44, &c.

And as to particular Controverſies, tho' one would imagine that wiſe Men of all others ſhould be leaſt apt to fall out about Words; yet it is an old Obſervation, that when learned and wiſe Men diſagree in Opinion, the Difference is commonly in the manner of expreſſing themſelves; or however it is generally about the Manner of the Exiſtence, not about the Exiſtence, it ſelf, of Things. Thus, what is better known by all than the Sun? and yet what Diſputes have there been and ever will be, concerning its Light, and Motion, and Diſtance, and Dimenſions?

But it ought likewiſe to be conſider'd, that in the Management of the Controverſies in Religion, ſuch as are otherwiſe good Men, are wont many times to be little favourable in repreſenting the Opinions of their Adverſaries; and if Men might be allow'd to explain themſelves, and were not provok'd and exaſperated beyond their own calmer Thoughts and Temper, the Differences in Religion would not be near ſo great, nor ſo many, as they now appear to be. It ſo happens in all Caſes, that Differences are widen'd by eager and contentious Debates; Men ſpeak more than they deſign'd, and then reſolve to defend what they have ſaid, ſo that Diſputes become endleſs, and are drawn out into Particulars without number, which were never at firſt thought of. Many Books of Controverſy are half taken up in asking croſs Queſtions, which perhaps neither of the Parties can anſwer to ſatisfaction, nor do they often ſeem to deſign any thing farther, than to puzzle one another, and to be as captious and as troubleſom as they can. But this ought not to be imputed to the Uncertainty of the Subject, but to the Perverſeneſs of Men; and thoſe, who upon every occaſion fall into ſo great Heats and Contentions, muſt needs be very well aſſured of that, in which they agree, that is, of the Truth of Religion in general, and of the Chriſtian Religion in particular, as to the Fundamental Points of it. The Differences among

mong Chriſtians may ſerve to prove to us the Divine Authority of our Religion, and of the Scriptures, which contain it, ſince Chriſtians agree in aſſerting their Divine Authority, and have never been ſo much at Unity among themſelves, as to be able to agree to corrupt them, but have certainly deliver'd them down entire to us.

2. It is not Religion only, which Men diſpute about, but there is nothing beſides, in which they have not diſagreed. It is obſerv'd, that Want of Experience and Knowledge of the World, leads Men into more Inconveniencies, than Want of Parts and Abilities. And it is as certain, that a thorough Knowledge of the Debates and Contentions in Philoſophy, would ſooner cure moſt Men of their Infidelity, than any Arguments could do. Thoſe who raiſe Objections againſt Religion, if they would but conſider, that almoſt every thing elſe has as great Difficulties, would be aſhamed to reject Religion upon Pretences, which, if they hold, muſt force them to reject all other things with it, and to believe juſt nothing at all. There have been Diſputes in all Ages concerning Light and Motion, the Winds and Seas, and other Wonders of Nature, but it would be abſurd, for this Reaſon, to queſtion, whether there be any ſuch thing as Light and Motion, and whatever beſides Men have diſputed about. And yet it is more abſurd, if it be poſſible, to allow that this is a good Argument againſt Religion, but againſt nothing elſe. If the Sun yield his Light, and Nature go on in her conſtant Courſe, tho' Men differ never ſo much in their Philoſophy about it, what can Religion be the worſe for their Diſputes? No body thinks, that he ſees ever the leſs for any Difficulties, which have been urg'd concerning Viſion; and why ſhould we be ever the leſs inclined to believe the Truth of Religion, by reaſon of any Controverſies in it? Men may diſpute any thing, and there is hardly any thing but it has been diſputed; but nothing

thing is the leſs credible for being diſputed, unleſs it can be diſprov'd, but is rather confirm'd and advanc'd by it. Truth is never the leſs Truth for meeting with Oppoſition, but is the more try'd, and the more approv'd, as Strength and Courage is by the ſharpeſt Conflicts.

Since then there will be Vices, as long as there are Men in this World, and Differences and Diſſenſions in Religion, as long as there are Vices; ſince they cannot be hinder'd, but by the Omnipotent Power of God, and there are great Reaſons, why he ſhould not interpoſe to prevent them; ſince Differences in Religion are ſo far from implying any Uncertainty in Religion, that they rather prove a Confirmation of it, and are in divers reſpects made uſeful and expedient to the Edification of Chriſtians, it muſt be great Inconſideration and Weakneſs, to produce them as an Objection againſt Religion.

There muſt be Hereſies, and *the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſly, that in the latter Times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith, giving heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils, ſpeaking Lies in Hypocriſy, having their Conſcience ſear'd with an hot Iron*, 1 Tim. iv. 12. The Scripture could not be true, unleſs theſe things ſhould happen, which are foretold in ſeveral places of Scripture. *Behold*, ſays our Saviour, *I have told you before*, Matt. xxiv. 25. it ought to be no new nor ſurprizing thing to Chriſtians, to ſee Hereſies ariſe, though they be never ſo wicked and abominable; becauſe we are forewarn'd to expect them, and they ſerve to give a kind of Teſtimony to the True Religion, in fulfilling the Predictions of it. They help to prove the Religion, which they would deſtroy: For if there had been no Hereſies, that Religion could not be True, which has foretold them; but ſince there are Hereſies, our Religion is at leaſt ſo far true, as to contain expreſs Prophecies concerning them, which we ſee daily fulfill'd; and as they evidently prove our Religion true in this parti-

particular, ſo they invalidate it in no other. Which is the [c] Anſwer that the Chriſtians anciently return'd to the Enemies of Religion, when they made this *Objection* againſt it.

Let us follow the plain, the known, and confeſs'd Duties of Religion; Humility, Temperance, Righteouſneſs, and Charity, and when once we have no Temptations to wiſh Religion untrue, upon the account of the plain Precepts and Directions of it, we ſhall never ſuſpect it to be ſo, by reaſon of any Controverſies in it. For if Men will impartially conſider things; that Religion which has now for ſo many Ages ſtood out all the Aſſaults and Attempts, which Enemies from without, and Parties within, could make againſt it, has approv'd it ſelf much better and more glorioufly, than it could have done, if there never had been either Hereſies or Schiſms. *Let us* therefore *hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith without Wavering*, being aſſured, that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, all the Power and Stratagems of Satan, ſhall never be able to *prevail againſt* the Church of Chriſt, but ſhall only ſerve to add to its Victories, and adorn its Triumphs. The Malice, O Lord, and *Fierceneſs of Man ſhall turn to thy Praiſe: And the Fierceneſs of them ſhalt thou refrain*, Pſal. lxxvi. 10.

[c] Juſt. Martyr. Dial.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

Though all Objections could not be anſwer'd, yet this would be no juſt Cauſe to reject the Authority of the Scriptures.

ALL Objections, which can with any Colour or Pretence be alledg'd, have been conſider'd, and anſwer'd, by divers Men of great Learning and Judgment; and ſeveral Objections, which have made moſt noiſe in the World, as that about the Capacity of the Ark, and others, have been demonſtrated to be groundleſs and frivolous. But though all Difficulties could not be accounted for, yet this would be no juſt or ſufficient Cauſe, why we ſhould reject the Scriptures; becauſe Objections for the moſt part are impertinent to the purpoſe for which they were deſign'd, and do not at all affect the Evidence which is brought in proof of the Scriptures; and if they were pertinent, yet unleſs they could confute that Evidence, they ought not to determine us againſt them.

He that with an honeſt and ſincere Deſire to find out the Truth or Falſhood of a Revelation, enquires into it, ſhould firſt conſider impartially what can be alledg'd for it, and afterwards conſider the Objections rais'd againſt it, that ſo he may compare the Arguments in proof of it, and the Objections together, and determine himſelf on that ſide, which appears to have moſt Reaſon for it. But to inſiſt upon particular Objections, collected out of difficult Places of Scripture, (though they would likewiſe obſerve the Anſwers, that have been given, which few of our Objectors have patience to do, but run away with the Objection without ſtaying for an Anſwer) I ſay, to alledge particular Objections, without attending to the main Grounds and Motives, which induce a Belief of the

Truth of the Scriptures, is a very deceitful way of Arguing: Becauſe it is not in the leaſt improbable, that there may be a true Revelation, which may have great Difficulties in it. But if ſufficient Evidence be produced to convince us, that the Scriptures are indeed God's Word, and there be no proof on the contrary to invalidate that Evidence; then all the Objections beſides, that can be raiſed, are but Objections, and no more. For if thoſe Arguments, by which our Religion appears to be True, remain ſtill in their full Force, notwithſtanding the Objections, and no poſitive and direct Proof be brought, that they are inſufficient, we ought not to reject thoſe Arguments, and the Concluſions deduced from them upon the Account of the Objections, but to reject the Objections for the ſake of thoſe Arguments; becauſe if thoſe cannot be diſproved, all the Objections, which can be thought of, muſt proceed from ſome Miſtake. For when I am once aſſured of the Truth of a thing, by direct and poſitive Proof, I have the ſame aſſurance, that all Objections againſt it muſt be vain and falſe, which I have, that that thing is true; becauſe every thing muſt be falſe, which is oppoſite to Truth, and nothing but that which takes off the Arguments, by which any thing is proved to be True, can ever prove it falſe: But all Objections muſt be falſe themſelves, or inſignificant to the Purpoſe; for which they are alledged, if the Evidence for the Truth of that, againſt which they are brought, cannot be diſproved, that is, if the Thing, againſt which they are brought, be True.

To ſhew this in Particulars. If a Man muſter up never ſo many Inconſiſtencies, as he thinks, in the Scriptures, yet unleſs he be as well aſſured, at leaſt, that theſe which he calls Inconſiſtencies, cannot be in any Book of Divine Revelation; as he may be, that the Scriptures are of Divine Revelation, he cannot in Reaſon reject their Authority. And to be aſſured of this,

this, it muſt be conſidered, what is inconſiſtent with the Evidence whereby the Authority of the Scriptures is proved to us: For whatever is not inconſiſtent with this Evidence, cannot be inconſiſtent with their Authority. In like manner, as if a Man ſhould frame never ſo many Objections againſt the Opinion commonly received, that *Cæſar* himſelf wrote the *Commentaries* which go under his Name, and not *Julius Celſus*, or any other Author; unleſs he can overthrow the Evidence by which *Cæſar* appears to be the Author of them, all his Objections will never amount to a Proof, that he was not the Author. If *Archimedes* or *Euclide* had uſed improper Language or Soleciſms, would their Demonſtrations have had the leſs Weight with thoſe, by whom they had been underſtood? Or, if they had ſubjoined an Hiſtorical Account of the Diſcovery and Progreſs of the Mathematicks, and had made Miſtakes in the Hiſtorical Part, would the Demonſtrative Part have been the leſs Demonſtration? And does not that Man make himſelf ridiculous, who, with *Epicurus* and *Hobbs*, pretends by Reaſon to overthrow Mathematical *Axioms* and *Theorems*, which he cannot underſtand? Upon the ſame grounds; if the Subſtance of what the Apoſtles deliver be true, it will be never the leſs Truth, tho' the Expreſſion were not always proper, and the Circumſtances of Time and Place in things leſs material had been miſtaken, and many things ſhould be written which are *hard to be underſtood*.

It is very poſſible for God to reveal things, which we may not be able to comprehend; and to enact Laws, eſpecially concerning the Rites and Ceremonies enjoined a People ſo many Ages paſt, the Reaſons whereof we may not be able fully to underſtand; and it is very poſſible likewiſe, that there may be great Difficulties in Chronology, and that the Text may in divers places have a different Reading: And tho' all theſe things have been cleared, to the ſatisfaction

of

of reasonable Men, by several Expositors, yet let us suppose at present, to gratifie these Objectors, (and this will gratifie them, if any thing can do it,) that the Laws are utterly unaccountable, that the Difficulties in Chronology are no way to be adjusted, that the divers Readings are by no means to be reconciled; yet what doth all this prove? That *Moses* wrought no Miracles? That the Children of *Israel* and the *Egyptians* were not Witnesses to them? That what the Prophets foretold did not come to pass? That our Saviour never rose from the Dead, and that the Holy Ghost did not descend upon the Apostles? Or, that any thing is contained in the Scriptures repugnant to the Divine Attributes, or to the natural Notions of Good and Evil? Doth it prove any thing of all this? or, can it be pretended to prove it? If it cannot, (and nothing is more, plain than that it cannot,) then all the Evidence produced in proof of the Authority of the Scriptures stands firm, notwithstanding all this mighty noise of the Obscurity, and the Inconsistency, and the Uncertainty of the Text of the Scriptures. And the next enquiry naturally will be, not how the Scriptures can be from God, if these things be to be found in them, (for it is already proved that they are from God, and therefore this must from henceforth be taken for granted, till it can be disproved,) but the only Enquiry will be, how these Passages are to be explained, or reconciled with other Places.

For let us consider this way of Reasoning, which is made use of to disprove the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures in other things, and try whether we are wont to reason thus in any case, but that of Religion, and whether we should not be ashamed of this way of arguing in any other case. How little is it that we throughly understand in natural Things, and yet how seldom do we doubt of the Truth and Reality of them, because we may puzzle and perplex our selves in the Explication of them? For instance, we discern

diſcern the Light, and feel the Warmth and Heat of the Sun, and have the Experience of the conſtant returns of Day and Night, and of the ſeveral Seaſons of the Year; and no Man doubts but that all this is effected by the approach or withdrawing of the Sun's Influence: But whoever will go about to explain all this, and to give a particular Account of it, will find it a very hard Task; and ſuch Objections have been urged againſt every Hypotheſis in ſome Point or other, as perhaps no Man is able fully to anſwer. But doth any Man doubt, whether there be ſuch a thing as Light and Heat, as Day and Night, though he cannot be ſatisfied whether the Sun or the Earth move? Or do Men doubt, whether they can ſee or not, till they can demonſtrate how Viſion is made? And muſt none be allowed to ſee but Mathematicians? Or do Men refuſe to eat, till they are ſatisfied how, and after what manner they are nouriſhed? Yet if we muſt be ſwayed by Objections, which do not come up to the main Point, nor affect the Truth and Reality of Things, but only fill our Minds with Scruples and Difficulties about them, we muſt believe nothing which we do not fully comprehend in every part and circumſtance of it. For whatever we are ignorant of concerning it, that may, it ſeems, be objected againſt the thing it ſelf, and may be a juſt Reaſon why we ſhould doubt of it. We muſt have a care of being too confident, that we move, before we can give an exact account of the Cauſe and Laws of Motion, which the greateſt Philoſophers have not been able to do; we muſt not preſume to eat, till we can tell how Digeſtion and Nouriſhment are made. In ſhort, this would run us into all the Extravagancies of Scepticiſm: For upon theſe Principles it was, that ſome doubted whether Snow be white, or Honey ſweet, or any thing elſe be of the ſame Colour or Taſte, which it appears to be of, becauſe they could amuſe themſelves with Difficulties, and they were too much Philoſophers

loſophers to aſſent to any thing that they did not underſtand, tho' it were confirmed by the Senſe and Experience of all Mankind. They were rational Men, and it was below them to believe their Senſes, unleſs their Reaſon were convinced, and that was too acute to be convinced, as long as any Difficulty, that could be ſtarted, remained unanſwered. And thus, under the pretence of Reaſon and Philoſophy, they expoſed themſelves to the Scorn and Deriſion of all who had but the common Senſe of Men, without the Art and Subtilty of impoſing upon themſelves and others.

And it is the ſame thing in effect, as to Matters of Religion. The Scriptures come confirmed down to us by all the ways of confirmation, that the Authority of any Revelation at this diſtance of time could be expected to have, if it really were what we believe the Scriptures to be. Why then do ſome Men doubt whether they be Authentick? Can they diſprove the Arguments which are brought in defence of them? Can they produce any other Revelation more Authentick? Or, is it more reaſonable to believe that God ſhould not reveal himſelf to Mankind, than that this Revelation ſhould be his? No; this is not the caſe: but there are ſeveral things to be found in the Scriptures, which they think would not be in them, if they were of Divine Revelation. But a wiſe Man will never disbelieve a thing for any Objections made againſt it, which do not reach the Point, nor touch thoſe Arguments, by which it is proved to him. It is not inconſiſtent, that that may be moſt true, which may have many Exceptions framed againſt it; but it is abſurd to reject that as incredible, which comes recommended to our Belief by ſuch Evidence as cannot be diſprov'd. Till this be done, all which can be ſaid beſides, only ſhews, that there are Difficulties to be met withal in the Scriptures, which was never denied by thoſe, who moſt firmly and ſtedfaſtly believe them.

But Difficulties can never alter the nature of Things, and make that which is true to become falſe. There is no Science without its Difficulties, and it is not pretended that Theology is without them. There are many great and inexplicable Difficulties in the Mathematicks; but ſhall we therefore reject this as a Science of no value nor certainty, and believe no Demonſtration in *Euclide* to be true, unleſs we could ſquare the Circle? And yet this is every whit as reaſonable, as it is, not to acknowledge the Truth of the Scriptures, unleſs we could explain all the Viſions in *Ezekiel*, and the *Revelations* of St. *John*. We muſt believe nothing, and know nothing, if we muſt disbelieve and reject every thing which is liable to Difficulties. We muſt not believe we have a Soul, unleſs we can give an account of all its Operations; nor that we have a Body, unleſs we can tell all the Parts and Motions, and the whole Frame and Compoſition of it. We muſt not believe our Senſes, till there is nothing relating to Senſation but what we perfectly underſtand; nor that there are any Objects in the World, till we know the exact manner how we perceive them, and can ſolve all Objections that may be raiſed concerning them. And if a Man can be incredulous to this degree, it cannot be expected that he ſhould believe the Scriptures: But till he is come to this height of Folly and Stupidity, if he will be conſiſtent with himſelf, and true to thoſe Principles of Reaſon, from which he argues in all other caſes, he cannot reject the Authority of the Scriptures upon the account of any Difficulties that he finds in them, whilſt the Arguments by which they are proved to be of Divine Authority, remain unanſwered. And all the Objections, which can be invented againſt the Scriptures, cannot ſeem near ſo abſurd to a conſidering Man, as to ſuppoſe that God ſhould not at all reveal himſelf to Mankind; or that the Heathen Oracles, or *Mahomet*'s *Alcoran*, ſhould be of Divine Revelation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The Concluſion; containing an Exhortation to a ſerious Conſideration of theſe things, both from the Example of the wiſeſt and moſt learned Men, and from the infinite Importance of the Things themſelves.

AS Wiſe and as Learned Men as any that ever lived in the World, have died in the Belief of the Chriſtian Religion, when they had no Intereſt to engage them to it; and many of them have led their Lives under Perſecutions, and have at laſt been put to Death, rather than they would renounce that Faith which the Scriptures declare to us. It cannot be denied, but that there have been Men of as great Learning, and as great Numbers of them, profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, as have been of all other Religions in the World: Indeed, all manner of Arts and Sciences have been more improved by Chriſtians, than by all other ſorts of Men whatſoever; and all rational and ſolid Learning is confined, as I may ſay, within Chriſtendom. For, beſides the Idolatrous Worſhip, and other Impieties notorious among them; whatſoever Learning is to be found among the *Chineſe*, or other Heathen Nations, their Notions of Things, ſo far as they differ from what is contained in the Scriptures, are ſo obſcure and confuſed at the beſt, and ſo groundleſs, that that Chriſtian muſt be very weary of his Religion, who can think of changing it for ſuch Uncertainties.

And no Man that profeſs'd and called himſelf a Chriſtian, ever disbelieved the Scriptures, but there were viſibly other Reaſons for it than theſe, which

the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion could afford: It was apparent in his Life, that he wiſhed the Chriſtian Religion were falſe, before he endeavoured to perſuade himſelf that it is not true. Some are poſſeſs'd with that intolerable Spirit of Pride and Contradiction, that mere Vanity and a Conceit of being wiſer than others, makes them find fault with any thing that is generally received; and the greateſt Fault which theſe Men can find with the Chriſtian Religion, is, that they have been bred up in it, and therefore they make heavy Complaints of the prejudices of Education, and the hindrances which ingenuous Minds labour under, from the influences of it, in the purſuit of Truth: And theſe Men, perhaps, might have talk'd as much, and to as much purpoſe, for Chriſtianity, as they now talk againſt it, if they had not been born among Chriſtians, and been bred up in the Chriſtian Religion; they ſcorn to be the better for their Education, and are aſhamed of nothing more than to believe and think like other Men; and they might almoſt be perſuaded to be Chriſtians ſtill, if they could but be ſingular in being ſo: For the mere Affectation of Singularity makes them deſpiſe and diſpute againſt any thing which others allow and eſteem. But it will be hard to find any learned Man of tolerable Modeſty and Vertue, and who was not as ſingular in other things, as in his Notions of Religion, but he has firmly believed the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.

It concerns all, who have any Doubts about theſe things, to weigh the Objections with the Anſwers that have been given to them by divers Authors, and withal to obſerve the importance of the Objections, and how far they affect the main Cauſe; and ſtill to remember, that it is at every Man's own Peril, if he make a raſh and partial Judgment. If our Faith could be of no Benefit or Advantage to us, nor Infidelity any Prejudice,

Prejudice, we might take the ſame Liberty to give Credit or no Credit to what we read in the Bible, that we uſe in the Reading all other Books, and to receive or reject it as we think fit, or to believe only juſt ſo much, as lies even with our own Underſtandings and Notions of Things, and at the worſt this would be but Folly in us. But it is Madneſs to reject our own Happineſs, and make our ſelves miſerable, becauſe we do not perceive the Reaſons of all the Means and Methods, which God has been pleas'd to uſe to make us happy; or are not able to underſtand every Word of that Book, which contains the Terms of our Salvation.

This is as if a Son ſhould chooſe to live miſerably, rather than to enjoy a large Eſtate left him by his Father, becauſe he doth not perceive the Deſign and full Meaning of every Particular in his Will; he ſearches out for all Ways and Arts of cavilling at it, and is fond of any Pretence to caſt it aſide as Counterfeit, being reſolv'd never to believe it to be his Father's: For his Father was a wiſe Man, and if it were his, ſuch and ſuch Clauſes would not be in it, ſince there is no reaſon, that he can ſee, why they ſhould be inſerted; ſeveral things mention'd in it, he believes are miſtimed, the Bounds of the Lands are not deſcribed by fit Names; beſides it is interlin'd, and he never will accept of ſuch an Eſtate convey'd to him by ſuch a Will; but chooſes rather to be miſerable all the days of his Life. This would be ſuch Peeviſhneſs and Perverſeneſs, as is not to be met withal, where our Temporal Intereſt is concern'd: But too many are too forward to reject the Tenders, and deſpiſe the Terms of an everlaſting Inheritance in Heaven, though at the ſame time they become obnoxious to all the Curſes threatned to Unbelievers, becauſe the Old and New Teſtament contain ſome things which may afford matter of Exception and Cavil to captious Men.

God

God has ſent his Prophets to call, and admoniſh us, and his Son to reconcile us to himſelf, by his Death; and to offer us Eternal Peace and Happineſs, and he has given us all the Evidence of it, that the nature of the things would admit. The *Jews* have aſſerted the Authority of the Old Teſtament from the times of *Moſes* and the Prophets; and the Chriſtians aſſerted the Truth of the Goſpel, when it was impoſſible for them not to know whether it were true or not; without any proſpect of Advantage by it in this World; but with a certain Expectation of all manner of Torments and Deaths; and the greateſt part of the known World, was converted to the Belief of it, and became Chriſtians; when in this World, Chriſtians were *of all Men the moſt miſerable*, and were ſupported only by the ſtedfaſt hope and expectation of that Happineſs which is promis'd to us in the Scriptures after this Life. And all things conſider'd, we have as ſufficient grounds for the Authority of the Scriptures, as we have, not only that any other Book was compos'd by the Author, whoſe Name it bears, but as we have to believe any thing elſe in the World. Now what do theſe Men? How do they receive ſo great a Bleſſing? Why, they overlook all the Evidence that can be brought to prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, and ſearch up and down for doubtful and obſcure Paſſages to diſprove it by; not conſidering, in the mean time, that nothing can overthrow their Authority, but that which can invalidate the Evidence, by which it is eſtabliſh'd. It would be the higheſt Folly and Ingratitude thus to deſpiſe God's Mercy and Care over us, if there were no Danger in it, but it being a thing of infinite Danger, it is no leſs than Madneſs: For what milder Term can be found to expreſs the deſperate Folly of them, who reject a Book, which ſets before us the means of Salvation, but at the ſame time forewarns us upon

upon pain of the ſevereſt effects of God's Diſpleaſure, not to neglect them: It is Madneſs, I ſay, if we rightly conſider it, to reject ſuch a Book, and at once both to affront the Mercy, and deſpiſe the Threatnings of the infinitely Merciful, and the infinitely Great and Powerful God.

It is a good Caution to the Atheiſt to forbear his Blaſphemies, and Contempt of the Divine Majeſty, for fear it ſhould prove true, that there is a God, at laſt, and then it will be a diſmal thing after all his profane Talking and Arguing, to be call'd before that God, whom he has ſo often deny'd. And it is as good Advice to thoſe, who make it their Buſineſs to find fault with the Scriptures, to conſider ſeriouſly whether they are ſure that theſe are not God's Word, after all that can be ſaid againſt them; and if they be not abſolutely certain of this, the Name and Title, which they bear, and which Men as wiſe and as judicious as themſelves, have ever thought to belong to them, ſhould methinks keep Men within ſome bounds of Modeſty and Diſcretion. For if they be indeed the Word of God, (and nothing is capable of being made more evident) then how dearly muſt they pay for a little cavilling Wit and Subtilty! The beſt and moſt Divine things may be deſpis'd and affronted by a bold and ſcurrilous Wit, but can Men think it a ſafe or a prudent thing to ridicule and ſcoff at thoſe Books, which, for ought they know, may be of Divine Revelation, when all the Reaſon, of which they fancy themſelves ſo great Maſters, can never be able to confute the Arguments brought in Vindication of them? Can they value the contemptible Reputation of a little Satyr and Drollery, at that mighty Rate, as to run the Hazard of being damn'd for it?

If Men have any real Doubts or Scruples, they muſt needs grant, that it is too ſerious a thing to jeſt and trifle withal, when no leſs than the Terms of our

everlaſting

everlaſting Happineſs, or everlaſting Miſery is the thing in Controverſy. And what Wit there may be in it, I cannot tell; but I am ſure it is no Sign of a very wiſe Man to ſpeak contemptibly of a Book, by which he can never prove, but that he muſt be judg'd at the laſt Day. *As a Mad-man, ſays Solomon, who caſteth Fire-brands, Arrows, and Death; ſo is the Man that deceiveth his Neighbour, and ſaith, Am not I in Sport?* Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. But what Deſcription or Compariſon can be found equal to his Madneſs, who deceiveth and deſtroyeth himſelf, and that eternally, and yet ſays, Am not I in Sport? Is not this the very Perfection of Wit and Raillery?

Wo unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker, Iſai. xlv. 9. *Do they provoke me to Anger, ſaith the Lord, do they not provoke themſelves to the Confuſion of their own Faces?* Jer. vii. 19. *And thou ſhalt know, that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy Blaſphemies. Thus with your Mouth ye have boaſted againſt me, and have multiplied your Words againſt me, I have heard them,* Ezek. xxxv. 12, 13. *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealouſy, are we ſtronger than he?* 1 Cor. x. 22.

There ſhall come in the laſt days Scoffers, walking after their own Luſts, 2 Pet. iii. 3. *But, beloved, remember ye the Words, which were ſpoken before of the Apoſtles of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *how that they told you, there ſhould be Mockers in the laſt time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly Luſts,* Jude 17, 18. If all that I have diſcours'd be inſufficient to convince theſe Men, yet let their own Arguments, and even their own Blaſphemies convince them; for the very worſt that they can ſay or do, ſerves to fulfil the Prophecies, and confirm the Authority of the Holy Scriptures.

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM